

Indians, Indians, Indians



Indians, Indians,
INDIANS Stories of
Tepees and Tomahawks,
Wampum Belts and War
Bonnets, Peace Pipes and
Papooses *Selected by*
PHYLLIS R. FENNER. *Illustrated*
by MANNING DEV. LEE



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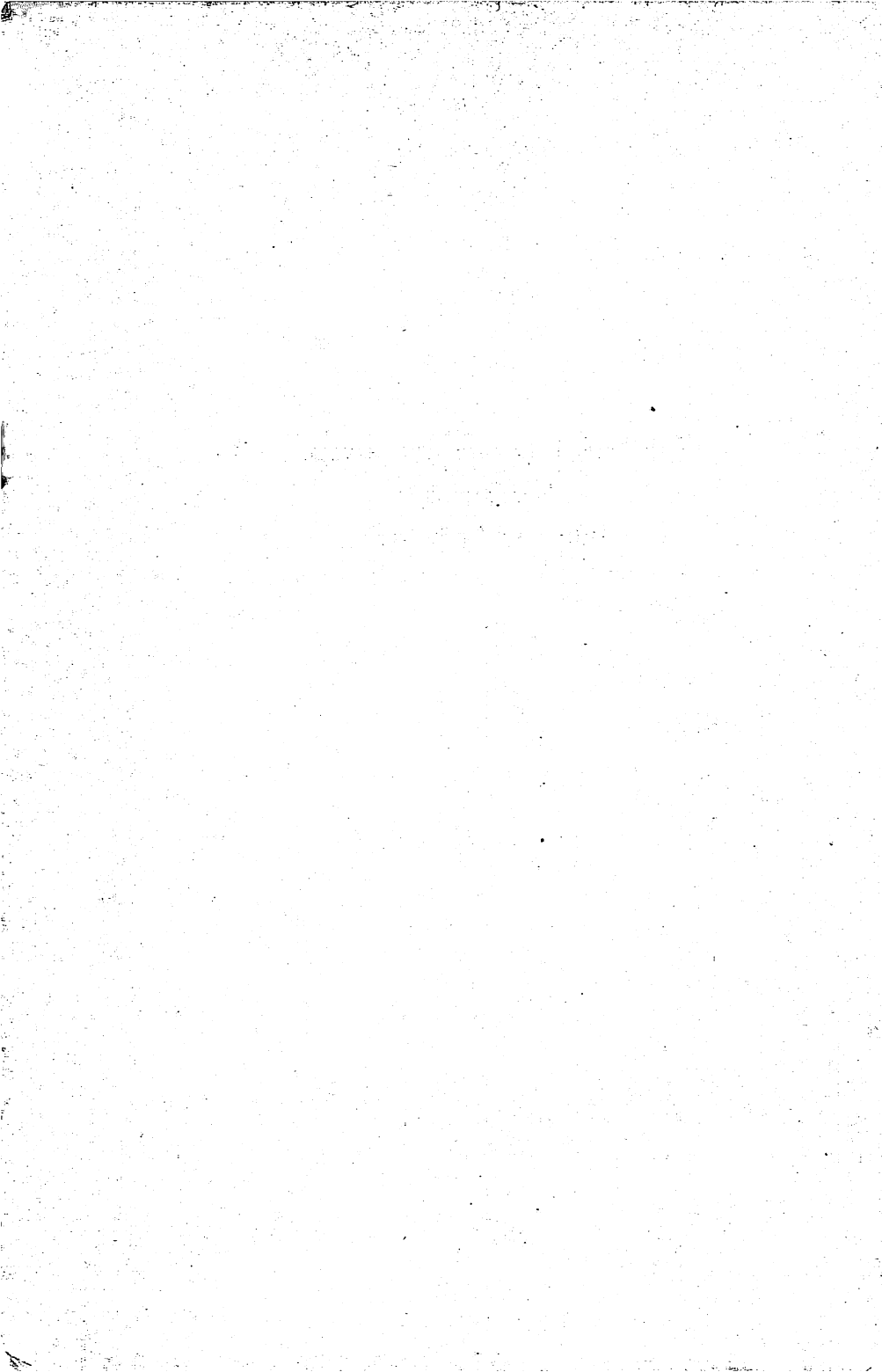
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Designed by Bert Clarke

Manufactured in the United States of America

This book is for *our* little savages,
The Twins,
Billy and Andy, Jr.





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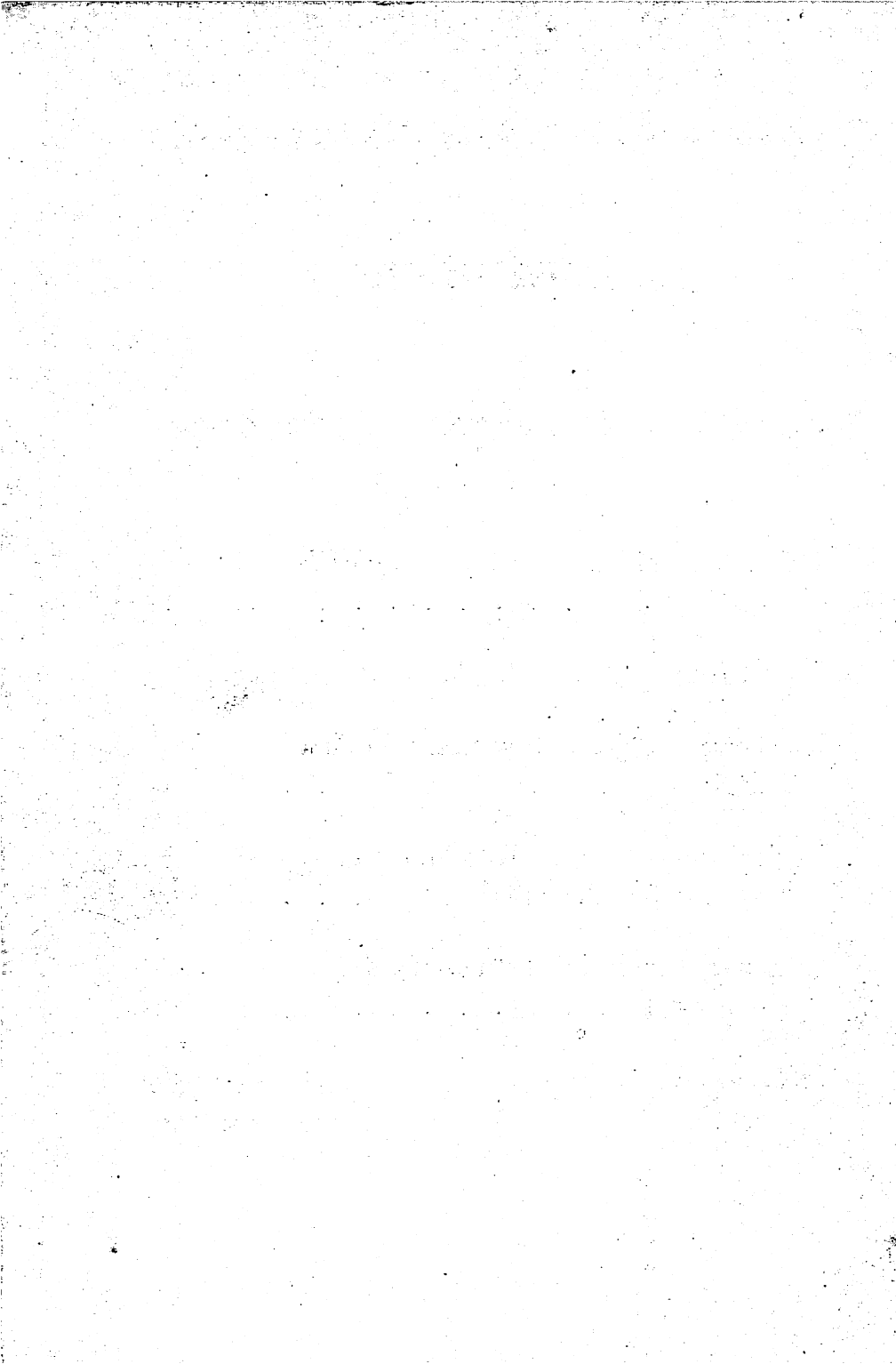
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Injuns Comin'



*"I don't know who this Indian is,
A bow within his hand,
But he is hiding by a tree
And watching white men land." **

And that's a fact. No one knows where the Indians came from, nor how long they have been here. But we do know they were here when the white men landed, and Columbus called them Indians only because he thought he had reached the Indies.

We also know that when the white men came the Indians were living in a bountiful country. Their plains were full of buffalo; their forests were full of deer; their streams were full of fish; there were delicious plants used for food. We know that the Indians taught the white men how to use these things, and that during the first

* "Indian" from *A Book of Americans*, by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet. Courtesy Rinehart & Company. Copyright 1933 by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet.

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winters the white men were here, the Indians gave them food to keep them from starving.

Later, some of the Indians became foes of the settlers. I guess you would have been angry too, if someone had killed off your animals, cut down your forests, and driven you far away from where you had always lived. Many Indians became cruel and revengeful; they scalped and burned and broke their agreements.

*"We won't go into all of that
For it's too long a story,
And some is brave and some is sad
And nearly all is gory.
But, just remember this about
Our ancestors so dear:
They didn't find an empty land.
The Indians were HERE." **

In these stories you will meet Indians of former days both as friends and foes, both kind and cruel; you will find that white men were not always persons of honor. You will even find the Indian of today when the irrepressible Augustus meets him for the first time.

P. F.

* Also from "Indian," by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet.

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Wilderness Road

by Jim Kjelgaard

CRAWLING CAT stood beside a huge live oak, his long rifle leaning against the tree. The Indian looked down at the quiet stream whose dark waters purled near the base of the great oak, and was satisfied with the warrior's image that stared back at him. Turning his head, he looked toward the village, where thirteen of his finest young braves were whirling in the wild gyrations of the war dance. It was time for him to join them.

There was a shade of melancholy in Crawling Cat's eyes as he watched the scene. Those lithe, hard young men, the proudest warriors left in this Shawnee village, thought war was a game, a delightful adventure wherein one crawled through the forest, made a proper ambush, killed his enemy, and forever afterward basked in endless glory. But the entire war experience of most of those young braves had consisted of an occasional brush with the Iroquois, and they were not going to fight Iroquois



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on this war path. They would fight warriors whose cunning and courage were fully a match for the Shawnees' own, and whose equipment was far better. Some of those bold dancers would never see their village again. Still, war was a warrior's business. When the time came that a brave must be struck down, it was well to be conquered by a worthy foe.

There was a light tread beside him, and Crawling Cat turned to face the slender young woman who had approached from the village. Her raven-black hair was bound with a leather thong, her soft doeskin clothing fell gracefully about her. Crawling Cat turned away, a frown on his face.

"Why does a woman bother a warrior on the hour of his departure for battle?" he demanded.

The creek's black water dimpled as a fish rose from the depths to pluck a floating fly from the surface. The widening circle of ripples crawled across to the opposite shore. The young woman, Crawling Cat's wife of one year, slipped her arm through his and laid her small face against his shoulder.

"I do not wish you to go," she whispered.

"I am a warrior, a chief of warriors."

"You are also a husband and a father," she answered softly.

Crawling Cat glanced toward the dancers and the villagers watching them. All were absorbed in the dance. He turned to face his wife, looking silently into the dark, worried eyes.



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"That is why I am going," he said, at length

She seized eagerly on the opening he had left. "You do not have to go. You could go with me to the west, my husband. We may return, with our son, to that village from which you brought me here."

Crawling Cat thrust her from him, ashamed of his moment of weakness.

"Yes," he said scornfully. "We could go. But this is the country of the Shawnees. The Shawnees will defend it."

"My father, the Chief, would welcome us," she pleaded desperately.

"Your father, the Chief, would also know that Crawling Cat is a coward, who dared not join Blackfish and help drive the white men out of Kentucky."

"Is not our country big enough for both white man and Indian?"

"No," he said bluntly. "You are a woman; these things are not for you. But since I may not come back, I will tell you. Twenty-five years ago, when I was a boy of ten, the first white men came to Kentucky. My father, who had gone there on a hunting party, met them. They were harmless. Then came other white men, until finally hunters led by the one they call Boone brought their horses to Kentucky, and killed more deer in one season than this village would use in ten. Now they have built their forts. Soon they will be so strong that they will drive us out."

"Are these white men good warriors?"



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"The best. They have fine rifles and much powder, and they laugh when they fight. But the white men now fight with their brothers across the sea, and it is a good time to drive them out."

"Must you take all our young men to fight, also?"

"I have accepted the war belt from Blackfish. Would you have a chief not keep his promise?"

"No," she said dully. "Go, Crawling Cat! And you shall not have the memory of a woman's tears to weaken you in battle. Go, warrior! Fight for your wife and son!"

She turned, hiding her face, and ran from him. For a moment Crawling Cat looked after her. Then he picked up his gun, strode over to the wildly leaping dancers, and joined the circle. The sure, solid rhythm of the war drums fired his martial spirit.

Twenty minutes later, as though by a prearranged signal, the fourteen warriors seized their weapons and disappeared into the dark, brooding forest.

There was a path, a beaten, well-marked path floored with brown earth and strangely out of place among the nodding trees and thick brush that lined it on either side. Yet the path was older than most of the trees that hemmed it in. For a thousand years before the *Pinta*, the *Niña*, and the *Santa Maria* had ever set sail from Spain, warriors who pitched their lodges or built their bark huts beside the Ohio had trod down it to hunt in the fabled land of Kentucky. It was the tribal wonderland, an age-old hunting paradise, with so much history



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that the mind of one man, or one generation, could not begin to know all the things that had taken place in it. Now, though nominally controlled by the Iroquois, it was a great larder for all the tribes who lived on or near its borders. Settled by no Indians, it was used by all who came along its ancient paths to replenish their food stocks from the countless buffalo, deer, bear, and elk that roamed its forest glades.

Crawling Cat led his warriors single file down the path, while he listened to and interpreted the voices of the forest. That blasting whistle was the snort of a white-tailed buck, disturbed at its browsing and resentful of those who had broken its peace. The shrieking in the trees ahead was a flock of parakeets, crying their jealousy of each other while they fed on wild grapes that had crawled up the highest trees to find a place in the sun. That sudden alarmed chatter was a squirrel which, surprised at its daily affairs, scampered to safety and spat invective at those who dared disturb it.

Crawling Cat recognized all, but stopped to investigate none. This was a war party, not a hunting trip, and only a portion of dried corn filled the pouch slung at each warrior's side. Corn was not as succulent as the meat of any of the animals sheltered by this great forest through which they travelled, but warriors going out to fight must travel light. There was strength in dried corn, and endurance. Corn gave to those who ate it part of the hot sun and rich earth from which its own nourishment was drawn. It had within it cooling rain, and soft, heavy dew.



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No man who carried corn needed to stop and hunt.

That was well, for to the north and to the south, on every little faintly marked path that fed this winding warrior's trace, more braves were on the march. Blackfish, the great chief of the Shawnees, had sent his bloody wampum belt to every village. All knew what it meant. Where the warrior's trace led past the great sycamore, so old and gnarled that it was venerated by all passing Indians, there was a natural clearing in the woods. Blackfish would be waiting there with his private council, and there the warriors who had run down their narrow, gloomy little paths would assemble in a mighty show of strength.

The little party led by Crawling Cat travelled far into the night, and only the eerie crying of the screech owls in the branches overhead could be heard when they finally turned aside to hide themselves in the forest and sleep. For a long while Crawling Cat remained awake, listening to the screech owls' senseless clamor, and thinking about the wife and son he had left back on the Ohio. Now he was possessed by a great hatred, a mighty yearning to come to grips with the white men who would take the Indians' hunting grounds. Dawn had not yet spread its pale fingers across the sky when he roused his band and went on. The third day after leaving the Ohio they came to the great assembly of Shawnees.

The clearing, one of those natural open spaces which exist in the thickest of forests, was two hundred and



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twenty steps beyond the old sycamore. Crawling Cat hesitated, taking a step, a half step, as he approached. The thirteen warriors who followed imitated him, perfect images of the leader who must go first and encounter any danger that might present itself. Crawling Cat stopped, peering through the sun streaks that stole down through the leaves. Then, unhesitatingly, he went forward.

He saw the warriors arrayed before him, and a proud light shone in his eyes. Usually, when either hunting or war parties went down into Kentucky, there were not more than a dozen men at the most. Here there were almost two hundred. They lined both sides and the center of the clearing, lurked in the forest, sat wherever there was room. Perhaps half of them had guns. The rest were armed with bows and arrows. All carried tomahawks and knives, and every one of the warriors was a man in the physical prime of life.

Crawling Cat's little band dispersed among the braves already there, while their chief stalked regally forward to meet the man who sat in a leafy bower at the head of the clearing. His mantle was the finest of doeskin. A spotless rifle leaned beside him, powder horn and bullet pouch dangled from his belt. The knife and tomahawk he bore were of iron, the equal of the finest boasted by any white man. Deep, intelligent eyes glowed fiercely in the dark face beneath the scalp lock. There were bitter lines around his mouth, and hatred in the grim set of his jaw.



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Crawling Cat faced him eye to eye, as befitted a proven chief.

"We have come, Blackfish," he announced.

"I see you, Crawling Cat. What strength have you brought from your village?"

"Fourteen braves, including myself."

"It is well." Blackfish nodded his satisfaction. He swept his hand around the clearing. "You know why we have gathered?"

"I know."

Blackfish turned toward the forest, as though the wind-rustled leaves could tell him something that he did not know. But he was the leader, the chief of all the Shawnees, and it was up to him to carry out the plans that had been made in council.

"Tonight, when the moon is high," he said, "depart with those warriors who came with you. We go from here in small parties, to burn scattered cabins and kill all those who dwell in them. In six days we meet at the fort the white men call Boonesborough. We shall burn the fort and kill all its defenders—all!"

Far off in the night woods a wolf howled. Another answered it, and the fear-maddened stag, on whose hot trail the wolves were closing, plunged through the moon-sprayed Kentucky forest. Crawling Cat, swinging down the warrior's trace with his thirteen men, gave himself over to thinking about the chase.

The wolves were not howling now. They were racing



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through the forest side by side, while the reeking scent of the buck they pursued floated up from the earth to tantalize their nostrils. The stag would make a mighty leap from some little hillock. Scarcely breaking stride, the wolves would gather themselves and leap after him. Then would come the final wild, fierce struggle in the night. The stag would turn, try desperately to defend himself with sweeps and thrusts of his craggy antlers, and strike with his front hooves. The wolves would dart and slash, panting in their eagerness to bring down the exhausted quarry. Finally they would do it.

Crawling Cat tore his thoughts away from the wolf chase and forced them back to the business at hand. It was a simple business. There were no complex problems to be solved; Blackfish himself had said that. They would all meet at the gates of Boonesborough, and reduce that white man's settlement to ashes. The white men themselves would burn in the flames that consumed their fortress.

Then, after Harrodsburg and Saint Asaph had also been burned and their defenders killed, the Shawnees could go home to live in peace again. That was the way Blackfish had planned it.

As he walked through the night, he became lost in admiration for the plan the chief of the Shawnees had conceived. A lesser chief would have kept all the warriors together, and if they were attacked they would all be surprised. But Blackfish had broken his band into small groups. If the leading party should be attacked,



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those coming behind could always surprise the attackers. More reinforcements would be steadily arriving. Also, small, scattered war parties could destroy more isolated cabins than one large one.

Dawn was already in the sky when Crawling Cat led his warriors off the trace they had followed, and into the woods. Now he was possessed by a great eagerness to push on faster. He knew this country, through which he had often hunted, as well as he did the beaten earth before the door of his own lodge. Just ahead should be a small creek whose snake-like course wound southeast. By following that, and then heading east where it made a sharp U bend, they should come out almost at the very doors of Boonesborough.

Furthermore, they would be the first ones there. It would not, of course, be wise for fourteen men to attack the fort, nor even give away the presence of such a large war party. They would lie in the trees and brush, and ambush anyone who came out. To them, and their village, would go the honor of first blood. They slept, ate of their parched corn, and started down the winding creek. Forty-eight hours later they broke over a ridge and saw the cabin.

It was a small cabin, made of the usual logs chinked with clay, and it was built almost in the center of a ragged clearing from which the owner had laboriously removed the trees. The remains of their trunks and branches lay, a heap of blackened ashes, on one side



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of the clearing. A black cow with a white face was tied to one of the stumps that rose like broken hafts of lances. Crawling Cat nodded to two of his warriors, who slipped away from the band. They wriggled like snakes through the forest, slipping from tree to tree and working their way around the clearing toward the cow. Five minutes later, as though she had been struck by some invisible force, the cow's legs buckled and she went down in a twitching heap. Crawling Cat nodded in satisfaction. He himself, watching closely, had barely seen a warrior rise and swing his tomahawk.

Exactly at that second the sharp crack of a long rifle blasted the stillness in the clearing, and almost at once another followed it. One of the warriors by the cow leaped crazily into the air, and came down to roll spasmodically about. The other took a few staggering steps toward the forest, then collapsed in an inert heap.

Crawling Cat turned his eyes toward the cabin, hatred for all white men plain in his face. His tongue licked out over dry lips, and his hard black eyes took flame from that hatred.

At the same time, he did nothing rash, for he recognized a well-planned and finely executed maneuver. The white men in the cabin should not have known that enemies were about. They had known it, and had held their fire until they were sure of killing. They would be difficult to deal with.

But they could be dealt with. There were twelve



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warriors and two, or at the most, three white men. The odds were all against the cabin's defenders, although the Indians had only five guns among them. They would soon have more.

Crawling Cat spoke softly over his shoulder, and four of the warriors slipped back down the ridge. They would go around to the trees at the rear of the cabin, and cut off retreat. Then, if the white men could not safely be approached and killed by day, they might easily be had under the protecting cloak of night. The warrior lying beside Crawling Cat grunted and raised his gun. He was too late.

A white man, a lanky, bearded white man carrying a long rifle and wearing buckskin clothing, had dashed out of the cabin door and run around to the rear. The warrior beside Crawling Cat grunted again, and raised his head out of the grass, waiting for the man to reappear. From the cabin door another rifle cracked, and the bullet plowed a bloody furrow along the warrior's head. He clapped his hand to his temple, and dropped back into the grass.

Crawling Cat gritted his teeth, but kept his eyes on the cabin door. At least one white man remained within, and one had gone out. They must join each other if they were going to make any effective defense. Crawling Cat trained his rifle on the door, and when he pulled the trigger a moment later he saw the white man who had run almost straight into his line of fire flinch and stagger. But he kept running, while two badly aimed



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arrows from other warriors thudded into the wall beside him. The white man disappeared behind the cabin.

Crawling Cat waited, watching to see if any more riflemen should appear, while shame enveloped him in a surging flood. Thirteen warriors, led by himself, had attacked two lone white men. Two of his young braves lay dead and a third was wounded. The best they'd been able to do was wound one of the cabin's defenders. That insult must be wiped out.

The white men could not stay in the clearing or behind the cabin, for they now knew that there were enough Indians to encircle it. They must run into the forest, and forest fighting was made for the Shawnees.

Retreating below the rim of the hill, Crawling Cat ran halfway around the clearing. He looked behind him, and nodded in satisfaction when he saw that three of his warriors had followed. That was right. Four here, three back where he had left them, and four who should by now be in the rear of the clearing. They would know what to do.

From far off in the forest, behind the clearing, came a quick shot and a high-pitched scream. Crawling Cat started toward the noise, slipping from tree trunk to tree trunk and travelling as softly as the shadows that flitted beside him. He came to the place where the trees grew sparsely, and squatted down to watch.

Just ahead, a huge tree trunk sheltered one of his own warriors. The man was carefully poised, all his eager attention straining toward a bit of brush and



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something he saw there. Crawling Cat followed his eyes, and saw the brown shape that belonged to no animal or bird. It was only a small patch, perhaps two inches square, but it certainly belonged to one of the two white men. He had thought to hide there. The warrior behind the tree trunk drew his knife, and hurled it straight to the mark. Just then, from a wholly different quarter of the forest, a rifle cracked like a whip-lash and the warrior slumped to the ground. Still looking at the brush, Crawling Cat saw the piece of leather hunting shirt fall away. The white man had placed it there as a decoy, to make one of the Shawnees betray himself. And he had done so.

Crawling Cat had definitely located the source of the shot now, and he wriggled toward it, his eyes glittering. An inch at a time, he slunk around the trees and through the brush that hemmed them in. He was Crawling Cat, the warrior who could approach and kill an enemy before that enemy was aware of danger. He saw the white man. Stretched out full length behind a log, he was reloading his rifle. Sticky wet blood made a great stain on the back of his shirt. Three times he tried to ram home the patch on top of his bullet, and three times the ramrod fell from his trembling hand. Crawling Cat levelled his rifle and pressed the trigger. There was a hollow click. The gun had missed fire.

The white man heard it, and turned on his side, trying once more to ram the patch down his gun. Failing, he cast the useless weapon from him and fought to





He drew a knife and awaited the Indian's coming



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stand. He clawed against the log, drew himself over to a sapling, and pulled himself erect. Snarling laughter came from his drawn lips as he drew a knife and awaited the Indian's coming. Crawling Cat felt the blade bite deeply into his thigh, as the white man stumbled and fell even as he was struck. Crawling Cat had swung his tomahawk only once.

He stood over the body of his enemy, looking down upon it, then knelt and sliced off the scalp with one deft motion of his knife. A warrior appeared, and another, and another, until eight were beside him. Crawling Cat looked up inquiringly.

"The other has gone," a warrior said. "We cannot find him."

"He fought well," Crawling Cat said savagely. "He fought better than we did. They were two against fourteen. They killed four of us and wounded one. Then, at the last, this wounded man stayed to fight so his companion might escape."

"White men are devils," said a young warrior.

Crawling Cat did not answer. Silently he picked up the white man's rifle and led his braves toward Boonesborough.

The great, craggy-horned buck that stood beside the warrior's trace and pulled at the tender branches of a maple sapling could understand only the forest things about him. Nothing could tell him that white men and red had fought great battles at Boonesborough, at Har-



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rodsburg, and at Saint Asaph, or that, inside their stockades, the white men had beaten back every attack the red ones made. All the buck saw of that mighty test of strength were the five braves who walked back up the warrior's trace.

Crawling Cat, bearing a fresh bullet wound in his shoulder and a scarcely healed knife wound in his thigh, led the way. Behind came two more warriors, and between them they supported a third who could no longer walk by himself. The fifth brave trailed far behind, and sat down to rest frequently.

Crawling Cat remained ahead of his warriors as they came to the Ohio, as they approached the village from which fourteen able-bodied men had departed. The five beaten warriors reached the last little creek between themselves and their clearing, and forded it. Crawling Cat's walk became a little more sprightly. He had left his village as a chief. As a chief who had won honor in battle—the scalp of a white man dangled from his belt—he was coming back. He arranged his weapons as befitted a chief, and gave the cry that announced his return with a scalp. Suddenly the sound was throttled in his throat.

On lazy wings, two sinister black objects were purposefully floating high over the clearing. At the same moment the stench of stale ashes became evident. Crawling Cat held up a warning hand. The two warriors who supported a third took him to the side of the trail, eased him down in a thicket, and themselves sought places of



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concealment. The one who had lagged behind found a fallen log and sank down on it, grateful for anything that would offer him rest. Crawling Cat went forward alone; if he led no men at all, it was still a chief's business to know what lay ahead.

Cautiously entering the clearing, he looked about. For a moment he turned his eyes away. Then he looked again.

The scorched leaves of the trees around the clearing bore a mute testimony to the fire that had raged there. The lodges lay in cold ashes from which all flame had long since departed. Fire had spread through the fields of standing corn, and scorched the pumpkins that had once colored the ground. A black vulture with a naked head and neck sat on a fire-killed tree and surveyed the ruins of which he alone was now monarch. He flapped away on lazy wings when Crawling Cat walked slowly into the clearing. The chief's face was expressionless, but his head drooped.

He jerked himself erect as he saw a woman with a child in her arms timidly emerge from the unburned forest on the other side of the clearing. She came slowly, leaving her moccasin tracks clearly imprinted in the black ruin that had been a thriving village. She stopped before Crawling Cat.

"I am glad that you have returned, my husband. There was no minute you were away that my thoughts were not with you."

Crawling Cat asked stonily, "Who did this?"



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"The white men," his wife said. "They came in the early morning, with blazing guns and swinging hatchets. I had risen before dawn, and taken our son to pluck the mushrooms that must be gathered before the sun is upon them. We alone escaped. We waited for you."

Crawling Cat turned his head toward the east, where the undermanned forts of the white men were still standing, after the fiercest attacks of the Shawnees. His wife followed his gaze.

"Do not go back!" she pleaded. "We cannot fight white men! Let us take our son, let us go west, to the village where my father is still chief. He cannot call you coward now."

Crawling Cat's gaze swept around the clearing, lingered on the forest that rolled away over the ancient hunting ground of Kentucky. In his mind's eye he saw its endless acres, broken only by the warrior's trace of the red man and the cabin clearings of the white. He spoke sadly, half to himself, half to the woman who stood there.

"My fathers' fathers lived and hunted in this green land, and it was good to them. But now it is a dark and bloody ground. Yes, we will go to the west."



The Second Race

by Merritt P. Allen

IT SEEMED to be raining headgear, cocked hats of the Continentals, felt hats of Daniel Morgan's Virginians, teamsters' round leather caps and caps of homespun and fur of the local Mohawk Valley men—all were coming down to their owners after a brief excursion upward. One, a broad-brimmed felt, met a mischievous air current and sailed into Lake Otsego.

Their cheering owners crowded around a captain and seven panting men.

"Gentlemen," the officer shouted, "first prize in the foot race goes to Corporal Hosea Williams of Clinton's Brigade." He handed the corporal a new rifle, and the soldiers whooped. "Second prize was won by Private Eben Hall of the Pennsylvania line." A hunting knife and more cheers. "And third prize to Private David Elerson of Morgan's Rifles, who finished last." He



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passed a battered shilling to one of the runners and the men roared with laughter.

Elerson, who was little more than a boy, took the coin and dropped it in his trousers pocket, bowing his thanks.

His face was brick-red but he tried to laugh and make the best of the situation. Losing the race was not so much, in fact he had done rather well to place a close seventh among the best runners in General James Clinton's whole army, but it hurt to be given the booby prize and singled out for ridicule. He thought they might have omitted that part of it. Probably the captain would have done so if he had not been a snooty Hudson Valley man who wanted to poke fun at one of Dan Morgan's crude Southerners.

Dave put on his shirt and went over to his tent, where he picked up his rifle, powder horn, bullet pouch and an empty knapsack. He wanted to go somewhere and cool off physically as well as mentally, for it was a hot July morning in 1779. He would gather some pulse he had seen growing in a clearing a mile or so from camp. When he got back he would feel better and he would also have a welcome supplement to army rations. It wasn't wise to wander off alone, but there weren't supposed to be any Indians around just then. They were gathering on the Mohawk to meet Clinton and Sullivan.

Outside the tent he bumped into Williams, who asked,



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a trifle condescendingly, "No hard feelings, young feller?"

"Shore not." Dave grinned. And to show he meant it he added, "Iffen you hanker for a meal of greens git a sack and come along."

"Bet your boots!" Williams was ready at once.

When they reached the clearing they leaned their rifles against a stump and slung their knapsacks over their arms like baskets. Williams was a good fellow, but as he gathered the pulse Dave kept thinking about the race. Perhaps he had been a fool to run but they wanted someone to represent the South and he was the fastest among the few of Morgan's men who were on hand. And he got the booby prize! No harm done, still it made a fellow feel cheap. It was only a foot race to kill time in camp but he would never feel that his slate was clean until he had wiped out that defeat. Not necessarily in public, just something done to convince himself that he was not a laughing stock. As he looked at it, a man must square things with himself before he could go far with others. When the war was over he was heading West, out to the Missouri and beyond, and he didn't want to be forever remembering that booby prize and thinking perhaps he wasn't as good as the next fellow.

When the knapsack was full, Dave laid it on the ground and started to help Williams fill his. There was a faint sound in the grass—perhaps a woodchuck was venturing into the clearing. He glanced over his shoulder and his spine prickled. At least a dozen Indians were



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in a circle behind them. Obviously they wanted to take the white men alive, for they had crept almost to leaping distance and were just rising for the rush.

Dave yelled, "Injuns!" and in a single motion caught up his rifle and ducked forward. Williams was with him, and as they sailed over a stone wall at the edge of the clearing a shower of tomahawks overtook them.

Only one hit, half severing the middle finger of Dave's left hand. Then the Indians cut loose with their muskets, but the soldiers were already in the woods. Dave squeezed his finger to stop the bleeding.

"They'll git us if we stop to fight," Williams said over his shoulder. "We can outrun 'em."

"Guess so," Dave answered. "Mile to camp."

"Follow me, boy," Williams ordered, still a bit superior.

From then on it was a race. Circumstances set the course, fate was the judge and the prize was the lives of the white men. Williams could run, there was no question about it. Dave threw back his head and put in everything he had, barely keeping the pace. Minutes and minutes and minutes passed. A mile? If he was any judge of distance they had gone three miles. Then they came to a stream and knew they were lost for they had crossed no water on their way to the clearing. That word "lost" was suddenly a fearful word. It threatened them whichever way they turned, warned them not to continue, promised them sure death if they stopped.



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They might be headed for almost anywhere but there was no time to check their bearings. Williams motioned that they would travel in the brook to cover their trail and then, as he looked back before stepping in, a yell told him the warriors were close enough to follow by sight. He jumped across, climbed a ridge, doubled in a long swing and, as he supposed, cut back to the brook, intending to backtrack to the clearing and from there to camp. But instead of a stream he found a ledge. Hopelessly lost.

"Know where we be?" He was plainly worried and eager for help now.

"No." Dave shook the sweat from his face. "I'm plumb twisted."

"If one of us could climb a tree and look—"

"Ssssss!" Dave pointed to the far end of the ledge where the heads of two braves were outlined against the sky. "They've got us surrounded almost."

"We might's well fight 'em here 'n now," Williams said.

"They're six to one, maybe ten to one. Let's run a spell longer."

"Well—light out. I'll follow." Williams had lost his chestiness.

"Pick 'em up!" Dave turned toward the thickest part of the forest, a stand of hemlock so dense it looked black, and once more put on speed.

The valley between the ledges opened gradually until the rocks disappeared. That lessened the chances of an



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ambush and made Dave feel comparatively secure, for he had increasing faith in his leg work. Things were going nicely and he almost hummed as he swept along. In time he judged they had covered about ten miles and, by golly, if the Indians had what it took to catch them they would have used it before then. There was less to worry about every stride.

"Elerson!" Williams's voice had a sudden ominous note.

"What's up?" Dave swung around and found the man in distress; his face was livid, his eyes were staring and blood was running from his nose. He had fought to the last atom of his strength.

"Winded," he gasped. "Leave me."

"No. We'll shoot it out here."

"Can't — shoot." Williams reeled.

There was no time to argue, no time to form a plan. Dave caught him as he went down and laid him between the roots of a giant yellow birch with his rifle beside him, then struck out at an angle to their back track into a small clearing, where he slowed up. When the first of the Indians appeared—two trackers and four scouts on their flanks—he took a shot at them. It was too far for a possible hit, but it brought them around sharply and decoyed them away from Williams.

Dave resumed running and smiled as he heard the shilling clink against some flints in his pocket. The winner of that race was done in, but the booby, the



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one they had laughed at, was still doing a fair job at footing it. Weary as he was, his heart sang as only a boy's heart can sing when he knows he is doing a man's work and doing it well.

The next time he saw the sun he guessed the time to be about three in the afternoon. He had been running at least for four hours and the Indians were still close. He must be slowing up for they had taken several shots at him lately and evidently were no longer fussy about getting him alive.

Or so Dave thought as he knelt to drink from a spring. One delicious swallow and something moved in front of him. He knew better than to sit up and make a target of himself, yet he did just that. A musket whanged back and to the right and the bullet pulled at his shirt, leaving a stinging wound across his ribs.

Dave lit out with all his remaining strength. Neither of his wounds bled enough to weaken him but being hunted for more than four hours in a sweltering forest, every moment only a jump ahead of death, was pulling him down. He had never fainted in his life but he wondered as he ran if that sick feeling under his belt and the lightness between his ears were the beginnings of it. Water would help. He had not had a drink since morning and had sweat quarts.

He crossed another ridge and found a brook in the valley. Come what might, he must have water. He swapped precious time for a long drink and looked up to see an Indian watching him from the rocks above.



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If the brave had a gun he was strangely slow in using it for Dave raised his own rifle, felt too shaky to risk a shot offhand, rested against a tree and drew a bead while the Indian stood there, perhaps himself too winded to move. When the lead found him he came headlong down the hill.

Dave slipped behind a big hemlock and reloaded. The faintness was growing on him and he knew he could not run another quarter of a mile. Perhaps it would not be necessary; the other Indians might have given up the chase. He slid an eye beyond the hemlock and saw eight or ten of them crossing the rocks. The jig would be up in a minute, but he would take one or two with him.

He was putting some bullets in his mouth for quick use when he heard the warriors yell—but it was the death wail. He took another look and saw them gathered around the fallen brave, who might have been a chief. Well, if they wanted to stop for funeral services he had no objection. He faded back, using the tree for cover, and disappeared into a dense coppice of young hemlocks. In their midst was the parent tree that had fallen long ago and now was as hollow as a barrel. He crawled in backwards, brushed out his trail with a twig, pulled a bush over the opening and waited. Waited until dark, waited until dawn and then crawled out.

He was still lost but he was rested. And the Indians were gone. A few minutes' walk brought him to a clearing where a man was hoeing corn, followed by a small



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boy lugging two rifles. The man said he was in the town of Cobbles which was between thirty and thirty-five miles from General Clinton's camp on Otsego Lake.

Dave took the shilling from his pocket and handed it to the boy. "Here, son," he said, "I don't keep second money."

"What's meant by second money, mister?"

"I won it in a race, but since then I've won a bigger race and a better prize."

"A better prize, mister!" The boy could not imagine anything better than a whole shilling.

"Self respect—and this." Dave touched the hair on top of his head and grinned.



The First War Party

by James Bowman

BOOM-BOOM! Boom-boom! Boom-boom!
Boom-boom!

The rhythmic beat of a boy's war drum sounded across the quiet Indian village, stirring it to sudden action. Before the last note had died away groups of agile young Indian lads were running swiftly toward the lodge of Chief Fiery-Wind, near an outcropping of feldspar in the center of the village.

The Eternal Rock, as the Oneida Indians called this feldspar, stood on a commanding hill which overlooked a shining emerald lake and an endless expanse of wooded valley. At the base of the Rock issued a spring of crystal water. It was from this Rock and this spring that the tribal Chieftains believed their ancestors had come.

When the boys were assembled in a circle before his lodge, Fiery-Wind opened the door-flap and came out



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to meet them. Despite his eighty winters the old Chief-tain's figure was erect. His left ear was completely missing and his right leg was stiff from enemy arrows. But he was still very much alive and his face shone like a torch.

"My young Warriors," he began, "what are the greatest accomplishments of the Indian brave?"

"Hunting and fighting!" answered a hundred shrill voices.

"And what is the greatest virtue?"

"Bravery!"

"What the greatest disgrace?"

"Fear and cowardice!"

"You have answered correctly," Fiery-Wind nodded in approval. "Now listen carefully to me. Today you are going on the warpath. A tribe of hostile warriors with poisoned arrowheads has invaded our hunting grounds. Your fathers and older brothers are away in the forest stalking deer. You alone remain at home to defend your mothers and your sisters."

"Who are these enemies we are to fight? What do they look like? Where will we find them?" called out a number of excited young voices.

"You will know all these things in time," Fiery-Wind told them. "But first you must make yourselves ready. Take red dust from the foot of the Rock, as your fathers do, and put on your war paint. Come back here when the Sun pauses briefly to refresh himself at the lodge of his daughter in the highest sky. Bring, each, your bow



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and quiver of arrows. Bring also a small, bound bundle of yellow willow twigs. Go now and make your preparations."

Flashing coppery heels sped in every direction.

Chief Fiery-Wind remained in his doorway going over in his mind the details of the coming battle. He was the oldest and most renowned Chieftain in the village, and for this reason he had been selected by the Tribal Council as teacher and trainer of the growing boys. It was a task greatly to his liking, for the old Chieftain had been a skillful warrior in his youth and he was also deeply learned in stream and forest lore.

The boys who were his pupils would soon be grown to manhood. They would then go out on war parties to fight their enemies. It was important for them to learn courage now if later they were to become victorious warriors. And Chief Fiery-Wind spent much time and thought in teaching them the things that they must know.

Today he had a plan that would try the courage of even the bravest boy. Early this morning he had discovered a great swarm of yellow hornets in a red oak tree in the forest, and had at once determined that the boys should put these warlike insects to rout. He had also determined not to tell them the nature of the enemy they were to fight. They must discover this for themselves when they reached the forest.

While he was still considering the details of his plan the young Warriors returned in high excitement. The



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older boys of ten and twelve were stripped to their breechclouts and moccasins. The younger ones were entirely naked. And all were painted in warlike fashion.

Eagerly they waited for their final instructions.

"First," Fiery-Wind told them, "you must choose a leader for your war party. Who shall it be?"

At once a voice piped: "Arrow-Flight!" And the next instant other voices joined in calling: "Arrow-Flight! We want Arrow-Flight to lead us!"

Arrow-Flight was the youngest son of Whirlwind, the village Chieftain. For this reason, and because he was a brave lad as well, the boys looked upon him with respect. Now they gathered round him, talking shrilly.

"Pur! Pur! Stop your chatter!" commanded Fiery-Wind. "Arrow-Flight will lead your war party. But he must be careful to organize his attack with the same detail that his renowned father, Whirlwind, works out his own battles."

During all this time one of the larger boys had stood slightly apart from the others, his reddish-brown eyes fixed intently on Fiery-Wind, as he listened to the plans for the day. This was Thunder-Stone, tall for his age and so precocious that he was shunned by the other boys, who thought him strange and different from themselves.

Thunder-Stone lived with his grandmother, Shining-Star, at the very edge of the village. There had been much gossip about the boy and his grandmother, for no one knew quite what to believe about them. But



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all were aware that their bark lodge held an air of mystery.

Often, when Thunder-Stone tried to join the village games, the boys taunted him. "Why," they would call, "you don't even know who your father and mother are! You must have dropped from the tail of some shooting star! Your feet make crooked tracks like the bear, and your mouth is the mouth of a snarling wolf!"

So Thunder-Stone, lonely and unhappy, had learned to stay apart. Now, as the old Chieftain went on with his instructions, he drew a step or two nearer so that he might miss nothing of what was being said.

"One of these days," Fiery-Wind was saying, "you boys will be men. If you learn to be brave today you need have no fear for tomorrow. You are going out to meet an enemy who lurks in the deep forest, seven arrow flights from our village clearing. About this enemy I shall tell you nothing except that his tribal council lodge hangs from a red oak tree and looks like a round, grey moon.

"Now listen closely. Approach secretly until you have surrounded this stronghold. Surprise its warriors by firing, each, an arrow through their council lodge. And when the furious warriors attack you with their poisoned arrows, beat them down with your bundle of willow twigs. Those of you who return with one or more enemy scalps, shall receive the highest honors of our village. Show me that you know how to make battle as skillfully as your brave fathers. I have spoken."



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Again the war drum throbbed. The boys, under the leadership of Arrow-Flight, set up a pole as they had so often seen their fathers do. Around this they danced until they had worked themselves into a frenzy. Then one at a time they advanced to the pole and struck it with their willow twigs, boasting loudly of how they would beat down their enemy when they came together in the forest.

After this the dance began anew. A hundred pairs of eyes shot fire and a hundred lithe bodies flowed like liquid copper, weaving intricate patterns in and out.

When the frenzy reached its height Arrow-Flight called for the drum to cease, and led the noiseless way into the forest. The young braves fell in behind him in the order of their size and prowess. The last in line was Chip-Munk, a lad of six years, with chest and chin held high and eyes wide with excitement. At some distance behind Chip-Munk followed Thunder-Stone, determined, at all costs, to take part in the coming battle.

As the boys entered the forest each one instinctively crouched low and disappeared, like thin smoke, among the shadows of the trees.

Fiery-Wind, who had hobbled joyously along in the rear, smiled at the skill with which his pupils hid themselves. He felt assured of their success in surprising and subduing their enemy.

For the first half-hour, except for the call and answer of what sounded like blue jays—the prearranged signal used by the advancing scouts—there was absolute silence.



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Then, without the least warning, the forest resounded with a sudden chorus of ear-splitting, blood-curdling war cries:

"Sas-ak-won! Sas-ak-won! Sas-ak-won!"

This outcry told Fiery-Wind that the boys had located their enemy's tribal lodge, had secretly deployed in a circle around it, and were now launching their attack. He was so delighted with their successful strategy that he hopped up and down on his stiff leg, and scratched at the ear that was missing!

Arrows now whizzed and whined from all directions, and the hornets were taken completely by surprise. Their tribal house was torn to shreds, and the next instant the air was filled with their outraged, charging braves.

In the pandemonium that followed, Fiery-Wind heard shrieks of pain from the young Warriors, mingled with whoops of victory. Each boy was flailing the air with his bundle of twigs to defend himself against the hornets, while advancing cautiously toward their lodge.

Arrow-Flight led the attack with cool bravery, beating down one enemy after another. Without flinching he bore many wounds. One poisoned shaft had pierced his forehead, another his back, and a third his forearm.

But little Chip-Munk, following sturdily along, soon fell into disgrace. When the first enemy buried its poisoned shaft in the middle of his bare chest, the terrified child threw down his bow and bundle of twigs and bounded away in retreat. His flight gave his pursuers a chance to assault him in a dozen different places. With



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each fresh wound Chip-Munk gave forth a mighty yell: "Go-wek! Go-wek! A man is killed! A man is killed!"

Nor did he stop running until he had plunged, up to his chin, in a pool of stagnant water.

From the moment the attack began Thunder-Stone's eyes had flamed with excitement. He screened himself with the branches of a friendly fir balsam, and as each enemy warrior came toward him he struck it down with a single crashing blow.

Fiery-Wind, watching these maneuvers, marveled at the boy's skill at concealment and defense. "Ho! Ho!" he thought, "this Thunder-Stone possesses a powerful orenda—magic—all his own! No wonder the other young braves do not understand him. He is destined to become a famous warrior!"

Slowly the noise of battle quieted, until only an occasional cry of pain or whoop of victory disturbed the silent forest. The young braves were now dodging from one hiding place to another, converging on their enemy's lodge while keeping alert for stray enemy warriors.

Then suddenly, to the surprise of all, the shining body of Thunder-Stone leaped forward, like a coppery beam of sunlight. He was the first to make a coup by leaping high in the air and touching the enemy lodge. He tore off a piece of its leathery covering and fastened it to his belt, as though it were the scalp of a slain warrior. While he was doing this with one hand, with the other he struck down a dozen furious, attacking warriors.



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Even Fiery-Wind's eyes were too slow to follow all of Thunder-Stone's movements, but the old Chieftain saw enough. "Surely," he thought, "this is the son of some god. No boy of human parentage could move with such speed."

At length the last enemy was slain, and at a given signal from Arrow-Flight the boys reassembled and counted noses. Two of their number were missing: Spotted-Fawn and Chip-Munk.

Spotted-Fawn was found lying where he had bravely fallen. A hornet had stung him squarely on the back of the neck and for the time his body was completely paralyzed.

His companions hastily wove a litter of twigs and bore him along with all the dignity and respect due a fallen chieftain.

As they moved toward the village one of the boys heard a faint cry: "Go-wek! Go-wek! A man is killed! A man is killed!" He followed the sound and came upon Chip-Munk, up to his chin in the scummy water and still imagining himself slain.

The find was quickly reported, and when the others arrived Arrow-Flight looked sternly at the weeping child.

"Come out of that mud-hole, Chip-Munk!" he said. "You are acting like a shirker. When we get home we will re-name you Coward-Heels, and ask Fiery-Wind to send you to the lodge of Golden-Glow, the childless squaw. We will tell her to dress you like a girl and



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teach you to do a woman's work. For you seem to have none of the qualities of a warrior."

From a vantage point Fiery-Wind had seen all that had happened and now he came forward.

"We will give Chip-Munk one more chance," he said. "He is still very young, and this experience may teach him a lesson."

Whimpering with pain and terror Chip-Munk dragged himself from the water. His back was swollen as with a dozen boils. Little Chip-Munk disconsolately brought up the rear, as the boys marched on.

When the boys reached the edge of the village clearing they formed a circle and raised the song of victory. A group of maidens, led by Yellow-Violet, came out to meet the conquering heroes. Each boy had attached his enemy scalps to the end of a straight maple sprout; each now held them aloft as he took his place behind Arrow-Flight and followed the maidens in a victory march to the village.

Then came much feasting and singing and dancing before the various lodges. Proud mothers heard of the deeds their brave sons had performed, and brought out their choicest food.

Each boy bore his wounds without a murmur. Johnny-Muskrat's left eye was swollen shut. Young-Flicker had a bump as big as a crow's egg in the center of one cheek. And Rabbit-Foot's nose was as red as a ripe strawberry.

Little Chip-Munk alone was absent from the merry-making. For while the visitors were celebrating he had



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run whimpering to his mother's lodge, where he crawled under a deerskin rug and cried himself to sleep.

When the honors came to be judged by Fiery-Wind it was found that Thunder-Stone, in addition to being first to make a coup, had killed three times as many enemy warriors as his nearest competitor. One of his trophy scalps was so large that Fiery-Wind decided it must have been the grandfather of all the hornet tribes in the world.

"This is very strange," the boys whispered together. "How does it happen that such a silent fellow so easily beats all of us? How is it that he escapes without the mark of a single enemy arrow?"

Fiery-Wind read their envious thoughts and said sternly: "Pur! Pur! Silence! Silence! Every brave Indian warrior knows that some Chieftains are born lucky. Honors come to such a one as naturally as the Morning Star brings the Sun, or as easily as song comes to a wood thrush. No brave should ever question the workings of the Great Spirit. Each must accept his lot, work out his destiny, and not be jealous at the success of a fortunate companion. I have spoken."

In silence the boys received this teaching. Then each made his way back to his mother's lodge.

That evening, after the men had emptied their birchen bowls of food, they came together in their council lodge and listened while Fiery-Wind recounted the tale of the day's battle.

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!" they roared



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in mirth. "Our young sprouts have put us to shame. Never have we brought home half as many scalps from our most successful battle as these boys brought home today. Our tribe need have no fear for this young generation!"

As each warrior carefully examined the giant hornet that Thunder-Stone had slain, he grunted in surprise and admiration. But it was Whirlwind, their Chieftain, who expressed the thought in the mind of each when he said:

"This boy, Thunder-Stone, has a powerful orenda. How it came to him no one knows. Here is a boy worth careful watching. Who knows what his magic may accomplish for our tribe when he has grown to manhood?"





Massacree!

by Carol Ryrie Brink



CADDIE had just finished eating and was about to place one of the silver spoons which Mother had brought with her from Boston on the plate beside her bowl. Instead, she held it suspended a moment in the air while she listened. There was another sound in the quiet room. It was the distant sound of hoofbeats on the road. Father and Mother had heard it, too. Father went to the window and looked out. Mother sat still, listening, her face turned toward the road from Dunnville, her knitting needles idle in her lap. People did not ride abroad at night in February without some good reason in those days. The sound of hoofs came more distinctly now. Someone was riding rapidly in spite of the darkness.

"They're coming here," said Mrs. Woodlawn, jumping up. "One of the neighbors is sick, perhaps. I must get my shawl and bonnet."



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The hoofs sounded to the very door, then stopped. Then someone was knocking, loudly and urgently, on the door. Father went and opened it. A cold wind blew in and Caddie could see the pale face of a man beyond Father's shoulder. She brought the lamp to light them. The man was Melvin Kent from the other side of Dunnville.

"I don't want to alarm you, Woodlawn," he said, "but there's a serious rumor going around. The Indians——"

"Just a moment, Kent," said Father, and he stepped outside and closed the door behind him.

Caddie set the lamp again on the table. Mother had come back with her shawl and bonnet. She and Caddie looked at each other silently, their eyes frightened and questioning. They stood together near the table, listening to the rumble of men's voices outside. All the peace and friendly security of the quiet room had flown out into the February darkness when Father had opened the door.

It seemed a very long time before Father came back. His face was grave, but outwardly he was as calm as usual.

"What is it, Johnny? What is it?" cried Mrs. Woodlawn, unable to bear the suspense any longer.

"Nothing serious, I hope," said her husband, laying his hand absently along Caddie's shoulder as he spoke. "A man from the country west of here came into the tavern to-night and told the men that the Indians are



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gathering for an uprising against us.”

“*Massacre!*” breathed Mother, laying her hands against her heart. Her face had gone quite white.

“No, Harriet, not that word,” said Father quietly. “Not yet. I hope that this is only a tavern rumor and nothing more. Many a fool who has had too much to drink will start a rumor. I am willing to stake my farm, and a good deal that I hold dear besides, on the honor and friendliness of the Indians hereabouts. Still, we must keep clear heads and be ready for emergencies. Whatever happens, the white settlers must stand together. I have told Kent that the neighbors may gather here.”

“Yes, yes!” said Mrs. Woodlawn. “We can house them better than anyone. How soon will they come?”

“They’ll begin to arrive by daybreak, I imagine.”

The white look left Mrs. Woodlawn’s face. Now there was something to be done!

“Daybreak!” she said. She looked at the clock. It was ten minutes past eleven.

“I’ll call Katie Conroy and we’ll begin to bake,” she cried. “No telling how long they’ll be here, and they’ll be hungry. We can shake down pallet beds in the parlor for the women and children. The men can bunk in the hay, if those wicked redskins don’t fire it before they have a chance to bunk. Fetch me six strings of dried apples from the storeroom, Johnny, and a bucket of water from the spring. I know! We can use up some of the turkeys on the neighbors! I am sure ’twill be a



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great treat to them as are not accustomed to excellent fowls, excellently cooked. Besides, if this thaw continues, my beautiful birds will be lost, and, Heaven knows, if the savages come, I wouldn't have *them* eat my turkeys! What, Caddie! Are you still here? Get to bed as fast as you can, child. I'll call you at daybreak."

In those days the word massacre filled the white settlers with terror. Only two years before, the Indians of Minnesota had killed a thousand white people, burning their houses and destroying their crops. The town of New Ulm had been almost entirely destroyed. Other smaller uprisings throughout the Northwest flared up from time to time, and only a breath of rumor was needed to throw the settlers of Wisconsin into a panic of apprehension.

"The Indians are coming! The Indians are coming!" Without waiting to hear more, people packed what belongings they could carry and started the long journey back East. Others armed themselves as best they could for the attack and gathered together in groups, knowing that there was strength in numbers. Sometimes, leaving the women and children at home, the men went out to attack the Indians, preferring to strike first, rather than be scalped in their beds later. The fear spread like a disease, nourished on rumors and race hatred. For many years now the whites had lived at peace with the Indians of Western Wisconsin, but, so great was this disease of fear, that even a tavern rumor



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could spread it like an epidemic throughout the country.

By daybreak the next morning people began arriving at the Woodlawn farm from all directions. They came bringing what food and bedding they could carry. They did not know how soon they would dare return to their homes, nor whether they would find anything but a heap of charred sticks when they did return. Of course, school was not to be thought of, and, in spite of the general fear, the children were delighted with the unexpected holiday.

With shouts of joy the young Woodlawns greeted Maggie and Silas Bunn, Jane and Sam Flusher, and Lida Silbernagle. Katie and her mother came, too. Katie's eyes were round with alarm, and she kept close in the shadow of her mother's hoop skirt. Both of them were quiet, asking nothing but protection. The other children played I Spy around the barn and farmyard, their pleasure keenly edged by the nearness of danger. An exciting game became much more exciting when, on coming out of hiding, one felt that he might find himself face to face with a redskin instead of tow-headed Maggie or gentle Sam.

Mrs. Woodlawn was in her element. She loved a gathering of people, and one of her great griefs in Wisconsin was that she saw so few outside her own family. Now she had all the neighbors here, and could herself serve them beans such as none but she, outside of Boston, knew how to bake, and slices of turkey which had



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their proper due of praise at last. Happy in the necessity of the moment, she did not let her mind dwell on the danger from the Indians.

Clara worked beside her mother, her thin cheeks red with excitement, her capable hands doing as much as a woman's. Caddie helped, too, but, after she had broken a dish and spilled apple sauce over the kitchen floor, her mother told her that she had better run and play, and Caddie ran. Flinging her arms over her head, she let out an Indian war whoop that set the whole farm in an uproar for a moment. Women screamed. Men ran for guns.

"Aw, it's only Caddie," said Tom, "letting off steam."

"Put a clothes pin on her mouth," suggested Warren.

But Caddie did not need a clothes pin now. The men with their guns looked too grim to risk another war whoop on them.

The day wore slowly on, and nothing unusual happened. The children tired of their games and sat together in the barn, huddled in the hay for warmth, talking together in low voices.

"You 'member the time the sun got dark, eclipse, Father called it, and we were so scared? We thought the world had come to an end, and we fell down on our faces. You 'member?"

"Yah. We saw a bear in a tree that day, too. Remember?"

"Golly! Do you think the Indians'll come tonight?"



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"Maybe they will."

"I don't dast to go to sleep."

Their voices trailed off, lower and lower, almost to whispers.

The night came, gray and quiet, slipping uneventfully into darkness. The February air had a hint of spring in it. Would the promise of spring ever be fulfilled for them? Or would the Indians come?

Mr. Woodlawn's calm voice sounded among the excited people. "I believe that we are safe," he said. "I trust our Indians."

Caddie's heart felt warm and secure again when she heard him speak. Tom and Robert Ireton went among the people, too, repeating Father's words. But others were not so easily reassured.

"It's well enough for *you* to talk, Robert Ireton," cried one of the women who was holding a baby wrapped in her shawl. "If the Indians come, you young men can get away in a hurry. You haven't any children or stock or goods to hold you back."

"Lady," said Robert in his rich Irish voice, "if the Indians come, sure, we young men will not be getting away in a hurry. We'll be here by your sides and fighting to the finish."

Caddie heard him say it, and straightened her shoulders like his. She could be as proud of Robert Ireton as she was of Father.

After dark, sentries were stationed about the farmhouse to keep watch during the night, and the women



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and children made their beds on the floor of the parlor, after the bedrooms were filled. No one undressed that night, and fires were kept burning in the kitchen and dining room for the men to warm by when they changed their sentry duty. Windows were shuttered and lanterns covered or shaded when carried outside. A deep silence settled over the farm. They did not wish to draw the Indians' attention by needless noise or light.

But the night passed as the day had passed and nothing fearful happened. The children awoke stiff and aching and rubbed the sleep out of their eyes, surprised to find themselves lying in such queer places. Caddie had given her bed to old Grandma Culver, and she was as stiff and tired as any of them. But the good cows had not been frightened out of giving their milk, and Robert Ireton, humming a tune, brought in two foaming buckets of it for the children to eat with the big bowls of meal mush which Mother and Mrs. Conroy ladled out of a great iron pot. The stiffness and queerness vanished like magic with the comfort of hot mush and milk—even if one did have to stand up to eat it.

But the second day was worse than the first. People were restless and undecided. Should they go home or should they stay on? The food supplies they had brought with them were giving out. They could not let the Woodlawns exhaust all their supplies in feeding them. Yet the redskins might only be awaiting the moment when they should scatter again to their homes to begin the attack. It was a gray, dark day, not designed to lift



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anybody's spirits. A fine mist, almost but not quite like rain, hung in the air and curtained all horizons in obscurity.

The women and little children, crowded into the farmhouse, were restless and tired of confinement. The men paced back and forth in the farmyard, or stopped in groups beneath the four pine trees that sheltered the front of the house, and which Father had named for Clara, Tom, Caddie, and Warren. The men polished and cleaned and oiled their guns, smoked their pipes, and spat into the mud which their boots had churned in the tidy dooryard. Everyone felt that the strain of waiting had become almost unbearable.

In the afternoon a few of the men went to get more supplies. Tom, Warren, and Father went with them. The others watched them go, fearful and yet somehow relieved to see any stir of life along the road.

Caddie felt the strain of waiting, too, and she was impatient with the people who had no faith in the Indians. The Indians had not yet come to kill. Why should they come at all? Indian John had never been anything but a friend. Why should he turn against them now? Why should his people wish to kill hers? It was against all reason. Good John, who had brought her so many gifts! Why should not everyone go home now and forget this ugly rumor which had started in the tavern?

"Caddie," said Mrs. Woodlawn, "go fetch me a basket of turnips from the cellar, please." Caddie slipped on her coat, took up the basket and went outside where



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the cellar door sloped back against the ground at the side of the house. She had to brush by a group of men to get into the cellar. They were talking earnestly together, their faces dark with anger and excitement.

"It is plagued irksome to wait," one of them was saying as Caddie brushed past.

She went into the cellar and filled her basket. "Yes, it's irksome to wait," she said to herself, "but I don't know what they mean to do about it. They'd be sorry enough if the Indians came."

But what they meant to do about it was suddenly plain to her as she came up the stairs again with the turnips.

"The thing to do is to attack the Indians first," one man was saying. It was the man Kent, who had ridden out on the first night to spread the alarm. Caddie stopped still in her tracks, listening unashamed.

"Yes," said a second man. "Before they come for us, let us strike hard. I know where John and his Indians are camped up the river. Let's wipe them out. The country would be better without them, and then we could sleep peacefully in our beds at night."

"But the rumor came from farther West. Killing John's tribe would not destroy the danger," objected a third man.

"It would be a beginning. If we kill or drive these Indians out, it will be a warning to the others that we deal hard with redskins here."

Caddie set her basket down upon the stair. It sud-



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denly seemed too heavy for her to hold. Massacre! Were the whites to massacre the Indians then? A sick feeling swept across her heart. Surely this was worse than the other. As if her thought had occurred to the first speaker, but in a more agreeable light, he said: "Let them say the men of Dunnville massacre the Indians, instead of waiting to be massacred!"

"Woodlawn will be against it," said the more cautious third man.

"Woodlawn puts too much faith in the Indians. If we can get enough men to our way of thinking, we need not consult Woodlawn. I don't believe in caution when our lives are in danger. Wipe the Indians out, is what I say. Don't wait for them to come and scalp us. Are you with me?"

White and trembling, Caddie slipped past them. The men paid no attention to the little girl who had left her basket of turnips standing on the cellar steps. They went on talking angrily among themselves, enjoying the sound of their boastful words. Caddie went to the barn and into the stalls. There she hesitated a moment. Pete was faster than Betsy, but he was not so trustworthy. When he didn't want to go, he would run under a shed or low branch and scrape off his rider. Nothing must delay her to-day. Caddie slipped a bridle over Betsy's head. She was trembling all over. There was something she must do now, and she was afraid. She must warn John and his Indians. She was certain in her heart that they meant the whites no harm, and the whites were go-



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ing to kill them. Good John, who had given her the little calico and buckskin doll with its coarse horsehair braids!

Oh, for Tom and Warren now! But they were gone with the men for supplies. Oh, for Father, who was always so wise and brave! But she could not wait for him to come back to tell him what he would never believe about his neighbors, unless he had heard it himself. There was no use going to Mother or Clara. They would only cry out in alarm and forbid her to go, and, since Father and the boys were not here, she felt that she must go. She knew as well as Kent where Indian John and his tribe had built their winter huts of bark. Fortunately, for the moment the barn was deserted. She must go while there was still time and before anybody saw her. She led Betsy to the little back door that opened toward the river. There was only one field to cross there and then she would be in the woods. The barn door would shut off the sight of her departure from the house and the road.

She had her hand on the latch of the door, when someone said: "Caddie!"

Caddie's hazel eyes blazed black in her white face as she turned. But it was only Katie Hyman who had followed her into the barn. Katie's delicate face, framed in its pale halo of hair, was full of alarm.

"Caddie, what are you doing? Where are you going?"

"Oh, Katie," said Caddie with a choking noise like a sob, "they're going to kill John and his Indians be-



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cause he hasn't come to kill us. I've got to warn him."

"You wouldn't go to the Indians, *now!*" said Katie. "Oh, Caddie, no! You *couldn't* do that!"

"I've got to!" said Caddie grimly. "They must have a chance to get away. Don't tell a soul where I've gone, Katie. Cross your heart!"

Katie hesitated, her eyes wide with terror. Caddie had always been the leader at school. It was impossible for gentle Katie to disobey her. Her fingers made a feeble crisscross in the direction of her heart.

"Cross my heart," Katie whispered.

Caddie flung herself on Betsy's back and dug heels into her flanks. She was away across the field and into the dripping wood. The gray mist was turning into fine rain. There was still snow in the wood and there would still be ice on the river.

Katie shivered. She closed the small barn door and stood still with both hands pressed against her heart. An old cat, who had kittens in the loft, came by on noiseless feet, a dead mouse hanging from her mouth. She stared at Katie with frightened eyes. Katie stared back, her own eyes round with fear.

"I crossed my heart," she whispered.

Clip-clop-clip sounded Betsy's hoofs across the field. There was a treacherous slime of mud on the surface, but underneath it the clods were still frozen as hard as iron. Then the bare branches of the woods were all



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around them, and Caddie had to duck and dodge to save her eyes and her hair. Here the February thaw had not succeeded in clearing the snow. It stretched gray and dreary underfoot, treacherously rotted about the roots of the big trees. Caddie slowed her mare's pace and guided her carefully now. She did not want to lose precious time in floundering about in melting snow. Straight for the river she went. If the ice still held, she could get across here, and the going would be easier on the other side. Not a squirrel or a bird stirred in the woods. So silent! So silent! Only the clip-clop-clip of Betsy's hoofs.

Then the river stretched out before her, a long expanse of blue-gray ice under the gray sky.

"Carefully now, Betsy. Take it slowly, old girl." Caddie held a tight rein with one hand and stroked the horse's neck with the other. "That's a good girl. Take it slowly." Down the bank they went, delicately onto the ice. Betsy flung up her head, her nostrils distended. Her hind legs slipped on the ice and for a quivering instant she struggled for her balance. Then she found her pace. Slowly, cautiously, she went daintily forward, picking her way, but with a snort of disapproval for the wisdom of her young mistress. The ice creaked, but it was still sound enough to bear their weight. They reached the other side and scrambled up the bank. Well, so much done! Now for more woods.

There was no proper sunset that day, only a sudden, lemon-colored rift in the clouds in the west. Then the



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clouds closed together again and darkness began to fall. The ride was long, but at last it was over.

Blue with cold, Caddie rode into the clearing where the Indians had built their winter huts. Dogs ran at her, barking, and there was a warm smell of smoke in the air. A fire was blazing in the center of the clearing. Dark figures moved about it. Were they in war paint and feathers? Caddie's heart pounded as she drew Betsy to a stop. But no, surely they were only old women bending over cooking pots. The running figures were children, coming now to swarm about her. There was no war paint! No feathers! Surely she and Father had been right! Tears began to trickle down Caddie's cold cheeks. Now the men were coming out of the bark huts. More and more Indians kept coming toward her. But they were not angry, only full of wonder.

"John," said Caddie, in a strange little voice, which she hardly recognized as hers. "Where is John? I must see John."

"John," repeated the Indians, recognizing the name the white men had given to one of their braves. They spoke with strange sounds among themselves, then one of them went running. Caddie sat her horse, half-dazed, cold to the bone, but happy inside. The Indians were not on the warpath, they were not preparing an attack. Whatever the tribes farther west might be plotting, these Indians, whom Father and she trusted, were going about their business peacefully. If they could only get away now in time, before the white men came to kill them!



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Or, perhaps she could get home again in time to stop the white men from making the attack. Would those men whom she had heard talking by the cellar door believe a little girl when she told them that Indian John's tribe was at peace? She did not know. Savages were savages, but what could one expect of civilized men who plotted massacre?

Indian John's tall figure came toward her from one of the huts. His step was unhurried and his eyes were unsurprised.

"You lost, Missee Red Hair?" he inquired.

"No, no," said Caddie, "I am not lost, John. But I must tell you. Some white men are coming to kill you. You and your people must go away. You must not fight. You must go away. I have told you."

"You cold," said John. He lifted Caddie off her horse and led her to the fire.

"No understan'," said John, shaking his head in perplexity. "Speak too quick, Missee Red Hair."

Caddie tried again, speaking more slowly. "I came to tell you. Some bad men wish to kill you and your people. You must go away, John. My father is your friend. I came to warn you."

"Red Beard, he send?" asked John.

"No, my father did not send me," said Caddie. "No one knows that I have come. You must take your people and go away."

"You hungry?" John asked her and mutely Caddie nodded her head. Tears were running again and her



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teeth were chattering. John spoke to the squaws, standing motionless about the fire. Instantly they moved to do his bidding. One spread a buffalo skin for her to sit on. Another ladled something hot and tasty into a cup without a handle, a cup which had doubtless come from some settler's cabin. Caddie grasped the hot cup between her cold hands and drank. A little trickle of warmth seemed to go all over her body. She stretched her hands to the fire. Her tears stopped running and her teeth stopped chattering. She let the Indian children, who had come up behind her, touch her hair without flicking it away from them. John's dog came and lay down near her, wagging his tail.

"You tell John 'gain," said John squatting beside her in the firelight.

Caddie began again slowly. She told how the whites had heard that the Indians were coming to kill. She told how her father and she had not believed. She told how some of the people had become restless and planned to attack the Indians first. She begged John to go away with his tribe while there was still time. When she had finished John grunted and continued to sit on, looking into the fire. She did not know whether he had yet understood her. All about the fire were row on row of dark faces, looking at her steadily with wonder but no understanding. John knew more English than any of them, and yet, it seemed, he did not understand. Patiently she began again to explain.

But now John shook his head. He rose and stood tall



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in the firelight above the little white girl. "You come," he said.

Caddie rose uncertainly. She saw that it was quite dark now outside the ring of firelight, and a fine, sharp sleet was hissing down into the fire. John spoke in his own tongue to the Indians. What he was telling them she could not say, but their faces did not change. One ran to lead Betsy to the fire and another brought a spotted Indian pony that had been tethered at the edge of the clearing.

"Now we go," said the Indian.

"I will go back alone," said Caddie, speaking distinctly. "You and your people must make ready to travel westward."

"Red Hair has spoken," said John. "John's people go to-morrow." He lifted her onto her horse's back, and himself sprang onto the pony. Caddie was frightened again, frightened of the dark and cold, and uncertain of what John meant to do.

"I can go alone, John," she said.

"John go, too," said the Indian.

He turned his pony into the faint woods trail by which she had come. Betsy, her head drooping under a slack rein, followed the spotted pony among the dark trees. Farther and farther behind, they left the warm, bright glow of fire. Looking back, Caddie saw it twinkling like a bright star. It was something warm and friendly in a world of darkness and sleet and sudden, icy branches. From the bright star of the Indian fire, Caddie's mind



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leaped forward to the bright warmth of home. They would have missed her by now. Would Katie tell where she had gone? Would they be able to understand why she had done as she had?

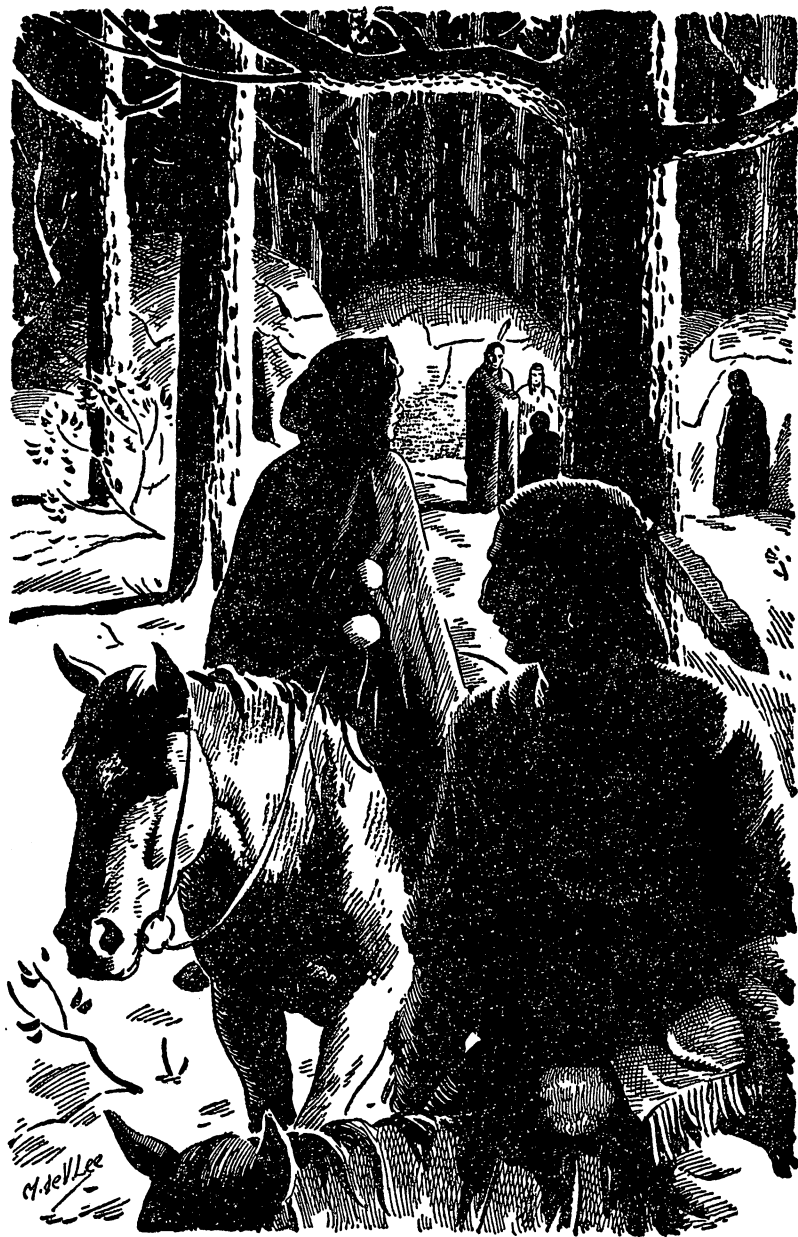
She bent forward against Betsy's neck, hiding her face from the sharp needles of sleet. It seemed a very long way back. But at last the branches no longer caught at her skirts. Caddie raised her head and saw that they had come out on the open river bank. She urged Betsy forward beside the Indian pony.

"John, you must go back now. I can find my way home. They would kill you if they saw you."

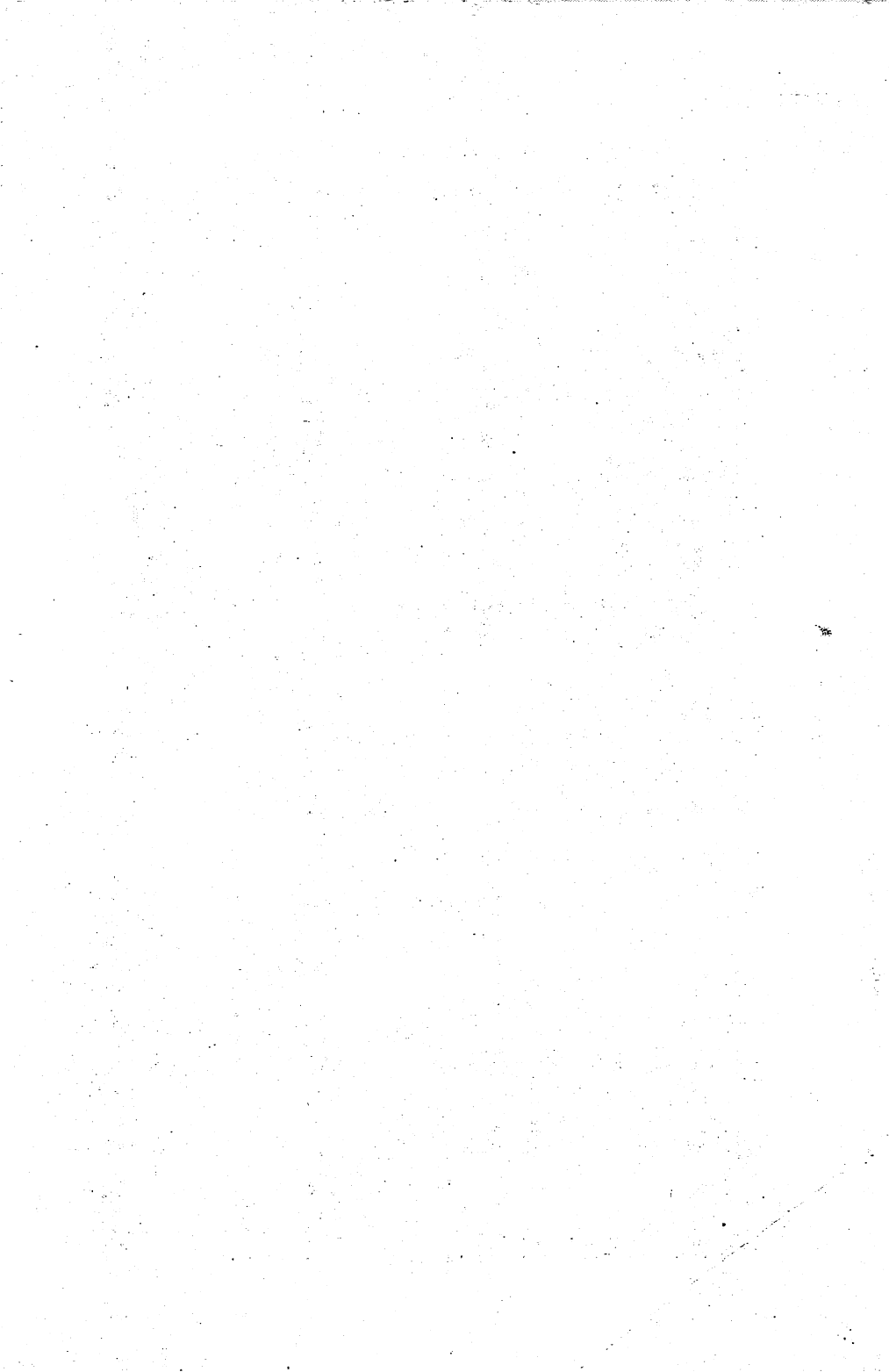
John only grunted. He set his moccasined heels into the pony's flanks, and led the way onto the ice. Betsy shook herself with a kind of shiver all through her body, as if she were saying, "No! no! no!" But Caddie's stiff fingers pulled the rein tight and made her go. The wind came down the bare sweep of the river with tremendous force, cutting and lashing them with the sleet. Betsy slipped and went to her knees, but she was up again at once and on her way across the ice. Caddie had lost the feeling of her own discomfort in fear for John. If a white man saw him riding toward the farm tonight, he would probably shoot without a moment's warning. Did John understand that? Was it courage or ignorance that kept John's figure so straight, riding erect in the blowing weather?

"John!" she cried. But the wind carried her voice away. "John!" But he did not turn his head.





They left the warm bright glow of fire



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Up the bank, through the woods, to the edge of the clearing they rode, Indian file. Then the Indian pony stopped.

Caddie drew Betsy in beside him. "Thank you!" she panted, "thank you, John, for bringing me home. Go now. Go quickly!" Her frightened eyes swept the farmstead. It was not dark and silent as it had been the night before. Lanterns were flashing here and there, people were moving about, voices were calling.

"They're starting out after the Indians!" thought Caddie. "Father hasn't been able to stop them. They're going to massacre."

She laid her cold hand on the spotted pony's neck. "John!" she cried. "John, you must go quickly now!"

"John go," said the Indian, turning his horse.

But, before the Indian could turn back into the woods, a man had sprung out of the darkness and caught his bridle rein.

"Stop! Who are you? Where are you going?" The words snapped out like the cracking of a whip, but Caddie knew the voice.

"Father!" she cried. "Father! It's me. It's Caddie!"

"You, Caddie? Thank God!" His voice was full of warm relief. "Hey, Robert, bring the lantern. We've found her. Caddie! My little girl!"

Suddenly, Father was holding her close in his arms, his beard prickling her cheek, and over his shoulder she could see Robert Ireton with a bobbing lantern that threw odd shafts of moving light among the trees.



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John, too, had dismounted from his pony, and stood straight and still, his arms folded across his chest.

"Oh, Father," cried Caddie, remembering again her mission and the last uncomfortable hours, "Father, don't let them kill John! Don't let them do anything bad to the Indians. The Indians are our friends, Father, truly they are. I've been to the camp and seen them. They mean us no harm."

"You went to the Indian camp, Caroline?"

"Yes, Father."

"That was a dangerous thing to do, my child."

"Yes, Father, but Kent and some of the men meant to go and kill them. I heard them say so. They said they wouldn't tell you they were going, and you weren't there. Oh, Father, what else could I do?"

He was silent for a moment, and Caddie stood beside him, shivering, and oppressed by the weight of his disapproval. In the swaying lantern light she searched the faces of the three men—Robert's honest mouth open in astonishment, Father's brows knit in thought, John's dark face impassive and remote with no one knew what thoughts passing behind it.

Caddie could bear the silence no longer. "Father, the Indians are our friends," she repeated.

"Is this true, John?" asked Father.

"Yes, true, Red Beard," answered John gravely.

"My people fear yours, John. Many times I have told them that you are our friends. They do not always believe."



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"My people foolish sometime, too," said John. "Not now. They no kill white. Red Beard my friend."

"He brought me home, Father," said Caddie. "You must not let them kill him."

"No, no, Caddie. There shall be no killing to-night, nor any more, I hope, forever."

Over her head the white man and the red man clasped hands.

"I keep the peace, John," said Father. "The white men shall be your brothers."

"Red Beard has spoken. John's people keep the peace."

For a moment they stood silent, their hands clasped in the clasp of friendship, their heads held high like two proud chieftains. Then John turned to his pony. He gathered the slack reins, sprang on the pony's back and rode away into the darkness.

"Oh, my little girl," said Father. "You have given us a bad four hours. But it was worth it. Yes, it was worth it, for now we have John's word that there will be peace."

"But, Father, what about our own men? They meant to kill the Indians. I heard them."

"Those men are cowards at heart, Caddie. Their plans reached my ears when I got home, and I made short work of such notions. Well, well, you are shivering, my dear. We must get you home to a fire. I don't know what your mother will have to say to you, Caddie."

But, when they reached the farmhouse, the excitement of Caddie's return was overshadowed by another occur-



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rence. Katie, who had sat pale and silent in a corner all during the search, rushed out of the house at the sound of Caddie's return.

"Caddie!" she cried, "Caddie!" Then suddenly she crumpled like a wilted flower, and had to be carried away to bed.

In the excitement of fetching smelling salts and water, Mrs. Woodlawn had only time to cry: "Caddie, my dear. You ought to be spanked. But I haven't time to do it now. There's a bowl of hot soup for you on the back of the stove."

In the kitchen Tom, Warren, Hetty, Maggie, and Silas, all the children, crowded around Caddie as she ate, gazing at her in silent admiration, as at a stranger from a far country.

"Golly, Caddie, didn't they try to scalp you?"

"Did they have on their war paint?"

"Did they wave their tomahawks at you?"

Caddie shook her head and smiled. She was so warm, so happy to be at home, so sleepy. . . .



The Buffalo Dance

by Cornelia Meigs

IN THE cool silence and in the level light of the late afternoon, Chanuka's canoe seemed to be the only moving thing in the wide expanse of marshy lake country. There was so little breeze that the tall reeds stood motionless, knee-deep in the still water. The Indian boy was not hunting today, nor was he watching for any enemy, that he moved so silently. It was only his unwillingness to break that spell of utter quiet that made him guide his light craft so noiselessly where the water grasses brushed softly along the birch bark bottom and between those tufts of green, where rocks, brush, and poplars or pines rose from the water here and there in a myriad of tiny green islands. Everywhere the tall rushes stood stiffly erect, so that he could not see, in any direction, more than a few yards beyond the high painted bow of his boat. Yet he moved forward steadily, threading his way without hesitation through that maze of concealing reeds and winding water lanes.



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He liked to feel that he was the only human being within twenty, fifty or perhaps a hundred miles, that he and the fish and the waterfowl had all to themselves this stretch of lake and marsh and river which lay to the southward of the hunting grounds of his tribe. Somewhere beyond that watery domain lay the grassy open country where dwelt the Dacotahs, the unforgetting enemies of his tribe.

The older warriors still talked beside the camp-fire of the long wars which had raged intermittently and furiously between nation and nation for a hundred years. Neither tribe could ever call itself actually victorious; but fighting would cease at times from sheer exhaustion on both sides. For some years now there had been uneasy truce, with the smoldering hatred ready to break out into fierce flame again at any moment.

Once Chanuka had said to one of the old braves. "The Dacotahs live on the prairies and hunt the buffalo, and we dwell in the forest and get our meat from the deer and the moose. We do not need to quarrel over hunting grounds. Why should we be always at war with the prairie men?"

To which the scarred and wrinkled fighter had replied, "We hate them; so did our fathers, so will our sons. That is cause enough. And you will understand when you grow older, that when spring comes, then the young warriors are ever restless and eager to be on the war-path. And for us the war-path must always lead southward."



The Buffalo Dance

Chanuka could understand the second explanation better than the first, for he knew that stirring of the spirit and the body in the spring, which might lead one anywhere.

Through those last years when there had been no fighting between Ojibway and Dacotah, both sides had avoided this special stretch of lake and swamp which lay between their two domains, so that it had long been left empty even of hunters. Now, moved by that same restlessness, which comes with the bursting loose of ice-imprisoned streams and the stir of life in the vast green wood, Chanuka had turned aside from his hunting to explore this unknown land and these unfamiliar waters. In spite of the knowledge that such journeying was forbidden by his chief, he could not forbear going farther and farther southward into the empty waste.

The last lake through which he had passed was wooded only on three sides, while the grassy prairie swept all the way up to its southern banks. This was proof indeed that he was coming close to the lands of the enemy. But the dense forest was still massed behind and immediately about him, and the sharp hoof-prints of deer and the big splay-footed tracks of moose had trampled the grass and mud of the shores where the wild creatures had come down to the water to drink or to feed on the lily-pads.

A blot of dense green, showing through the pale stems of the rushes, told him finally that he was approaching an island, solid ground in this empty wilderness of rip-



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ples and swaying reeds. He came near, dipping his blade easily and lightly, and then suddenly paused, with his paddle half lifted, frozen into an immovable statue of wary listening. He had heard a voice issuing from the dense undergrowth of the island, a voice which muttered, dropped into silence, then fell to muttering again or rose to a curious half-choked cry.

With a motion as soundless as that of a fish's quivering fin, Chanuka paddled nearer, yard by yard until he was stealing under the drooping boughs of overhanging trees, until he was peering out at a bit of gravel beach and a narrow grassy clearing.

That which he saw first was a canoe, or rather had once been a canoe. It was not a trim birch-bark vessel such as was bearing Chanuka on his voyaging, but the clumsier dugout craft of the sort that the Indians dwelling on the southern rivers fashioned from tree trunks. It was battered and trampled now, into hopeless ruin, stamped half-way into the soft ground, with the snapped blade of the paddle lying beside it along with a broken bow and a spilled quiver of arrows. After one long, silent survey, Chanuka stepped ashore and walked, without attempt at concealment, across the slope where the turf was plowed and torn by the stamping hoofs of some great animal.

The master of that broken vessel was extended at full length, half hidden below a thicket of brambles. One arm was crumpled under him; the other was flung before his face. Long, lean, and red-skinned he lay inert



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and helpless, muttering and whispering to himself, taking no notice, even when Chanuka finally knelt down beside him on the grass. The arm under him was undoubtedly broken; his whole body was bruised and torn with a dozen jagged gashes, while the hot fever of untended wounds was evidently running like fire through his whole being. Chanuka laid his firm brown fingers against that burning skin and nodded.

"No one but a plains-dwelling Dacotah," he commented within himself, "would know so little as to stand against the charge of a wounded moose."

All up and down upon the grass was written the record of that encounter when the great ugly-tempered beast, wounded and furious had turned upon the unwary hunter. Here were wounds of lashing, goring horns, here was the broken bow from which the arrow had sped too late.

"He thought he was hunting a creature like one of his stupid buffalo," the Ojibway boy reflected in scorn.

The Dacotah had evidently followed the animal through the marsh, not knowing that the moment it felt firm ground under its feet the moose would turn upon him in deadly attack. Canoe, weapons, the limp, helpless body under its feet—all alike were objects of the huge beast's blind onslaught. One final charge had carried it clean over the fallen quarry, and it had gone, plunging and splashing across the marsh, leaving the silent glade far behind. The keen eyes of the Indian boy could read plainly the whole tale.



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Chanuka's eyes glinted with a sudden spark as he stooped over the wounded stranger. He had thought, more than once, as he paddled through the reeds, and the rapids, of the black disfavor with which the chief of his village would greet him upon his return. The year before in the same foolhardy curiosity he had journeyed down into the prairie region and on his return had been met with severe reprimand and punishment as well.

"If a warrior seeks out the enemy's country, he must not come home empty-handed," the hard-faced old Indian had said and had set the boy to do squaw's work for the waxing and waning of the first snow-moon. The memory of that penalty had often burned hotly in Chanuka's heart; but it had not kept him back when the spring unrest set him once more to roving. And this time he would not come home empty-handed; he would bring a captive from the tribe of their foes, a Dacotah warrior, helpless in the bottom of his canoe.

He stooped and half lifted, half dragged the limp figure out from among the brambles to lie upon the open grass. As he did so the glittering light in his eyes died suddenly. For a long minute he stood frowning down upon that truth which a better view had revealed. Long of limb though the Dacotah might be, he was evidently not yet a grown warrior. His age must be much the same as Chanuka's own.

A boy, a boy taken with the same sudden impulse to wander into hostile country for no better reason than that it was forbidden! It would have been a glorious triumph



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to carry home a captured brave. But would the triumph be quite the same, when the captive was a headlong blundering lad, who had dared the same dangers as himself and had fallen into unexpected misfortune?

Hardly admitting, even in his own mind, just what was his final purpose, Chanuka stooped once more and began, as best he could, to tend the other's hurts. Every warrior knew a little of how bleeding wounds could be bound up with leaves and bark. Darkness fell while he was still at work; he kindled a fire, brought from his canoe a wild duck which he had shot earlier in the day and set it to broiling before the coals.

When the savory fowl was ready he attempted to feed the wounded Dacotah, but that burning throat would swallow nothing but water. After the first long cool draught from the bark cup which Chanuka set to his lips, the long lad's tossing and mumbling eased a little. He kept repeating a single word thereafter, which Chanuka began to understand stood for water—ever more water. In the end the Ojibway boy forgot to eat and bent all his absorbed effort upon bringing sufficient water, and moving the sufferer from time to time when one position became unbearable and he stirred and struggled feebly to shift to another.

The moon rose and stood high above the trees; the dark ripples lapped softly on the shore, and that muttering voice went on and on. There was never a groan, never a querulous note of complaint. Even with his mind and spirit wandering somewhere in that land of shadows



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which borders upon death, the young Dacotah's instinct held true. Not once did he cry out with the pain which was consuming him.

All night Chanuka toiled over him. It was only when the moon was dropping and the sky growing white to the eastward, that the fever seemed to abate and the Dacotah lay more quietly. When the morning broke over the silent marsh, the two Indian boys lay together upon the grass, side by side, both fast asleep.

There followed some days of strange comradeship. On the second morning the Dacotah tried to stand, but could not; on the third he made determined effort to walk, and by the fourth could move about, although but slowly and painfully. His wounds would give him pain for a long time still, and the scars would be with him throughout his life; but the iron strength of an Indian would not yield to weakness and fever for more than the briefest stretch of days.

The two could not talk together; nor did they make any real effort to communicate by that language of signs with which all red men are familiar. That they were enemies, brought together in surprising and accidental truce, was a thing which neither of them seemed able to forget. Yet they caught fish and cooked them together, snared rabbits and ate them in company, and, as on that first night, slept side by side upon the grass.

It was the Dacotah who made the only effort at further acquaintance. His name, it seemed, was Neosho. He offered this information and once or twice seemed to be



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trying, further, to give his rescuer some knowledge of the country in which he dwelt and the life of his people in their buffalo-skin lodges beside the big southward-flowing river. But Chanuka did not offer much attention to what the other was attempting to tell, and, after a little, the Dacotah ceased any efforts at a semblance of talk. Had not Chanuka, on that foolhardy journey of seven moons ago, seen those same lodges of Neosho's people in the open country near that same river? He had stolen so close, under cover of the darkness, that he had actually lain hidden on one side of a small creek, while, upon the flat open ground of the opposite bank, the people of that Dacotah village had built their circle of fires and had danced the Buffalo Dance. He could see and hear them still, the red flames, the strangely moving dancers, the chanting voices and the thumping of the drums coming out of the darkness.

The Buffalo Dance celebrates the festival when the Dacotah braves have come home from their summer hunting, laden with the meat which is to be their provision against the winter. Only three dancers take part in it. First comes the warrior who represents the buffalo, wrapped in a brown, hairy robe and bearing the shaggy horned head pulled down over his own like a mask. He crouches and dances forward, tossing the head from side to side, imitating the lumbering gait of the buffalo. Next comes the horse, a man wrapped in a pony's hide and covering his face with the rude effigy of the animal's head. He moves it up and down, imitating the jogging



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motion of a horse loping along the buffalo trail. Last comes the hunter with his bow and arrows, rehearsing in pantomime all the adventures of the summer's chase.

Much as Chanuka would have liked to know more of the Dacotahs and their ways, he fought against paying heed to what Neosho was trying to tell him. He would sit beside the fire moody and brooding, or would go silently about his work of bringing food and caring for his comrade's wounds. There had been some idea in his mind, at first, of letting the Dacotah boy recover somewhat, and then of challenging him to mortal combat, as was fitting between enemies. But as he watched the other limping back and forth across the glade, slowly coming again to his former strength, the Ojibway's determination failed. The days passed, and no challenge came.

Even through their long silences there was something growing up between them. Could it be called friendship between two mortal enemies? One had fallen into dire misfortune; the other had scorned to take advantage of his helplessness. Does such a thing make friends? Neither would betray by word or sign whether such were possible.

It was on the fifth day that they finally parted. The sun was rising red above the marsh when Chanuka signed to the other to take his place in the bow of the bark canoe. Neosho could not have known whether he was to be carried to freedom or back into the forest to fall into the hands of his deadly foes.

He cast one glance at his broken bow still lying upon



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the ground and then with unchanging face stepped into the light craft which was already lifting to the ripples. Chanuka dipped his paddle and they slipped away through the rushes.

The unseen hand of a slight current bore them away southwestward, carried them at gathering speed through a narrow stream, then out upon the broad silver of a quiet lake. The forest was behind them; from the opposite shore the prairie lands, dotted with groves of trees, stretched away in green and rolling ridges. Chanuka brought the bow of the boat to land, and sat waiting without a word while his companion stepped out upon the grassy bank and strode away up the green rise. As he crossed the shoulder of the ridge, Neosho looked back and raised his hand. Chanuka lifted his paddle. That was the whole of their leave-taking before the Dacotah disappeared beyond the grassy summit. The Ojibway pushed off his vessel into deep water, swung the bow and set himself to paddling steadily northward.

If Chanuka wondered, on his homeward journey, what was to be the end of that forbidden adventure, he wondered still more when he arrived at his journey's end. He had been made to do sharp penance for that earlier expedition into the plains country; but this time, when he returned after an unexplained absence of eleven days and with nothing to show but a few wild ducks and a string of fish, no word was said. He was conscious that the eyes of the wrinkled old chief followed him as he went to and fro in the village. But if there was



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to be punishment for his disobeying, it was slow in coming.

The months of the summer passed with all the braves occupied by the season's hunting. Then the autumn began to draw on. The wild rice was ripening along the edges of the marshes, the swamp maples were turning red, and the dry rustle of the wind in the poplars foretold the coming of the winter tempests.

It was after a long day of hunting in the rice swamps that Chanuka was summoned at evening to the lodge of his chief. The great man sat alone before the smoldering fire and looked at the young brave with hard, narrow eyes. The moment of reckoning for that stolen expedition had come.

"You who have a heart so set upon voyages to the southward, are now to take a new journey," the chief said at last.

As a proper brave should, Chanuka waited in silence for the whole substance of his leader's commands.

"It may be that the time is coming close for us to do battle once more against our age-long enemies, the Dacotahs," the other went on. "The signs of sky and forest point to a hard winter; but our hunting has been good, so that our tribe will not have lost in strength before the spring. We must discover whether our foes are to fare as well through the season of the snows. That is to be your task."

He paused, seemingly to search the boy's face for any sign of dismay. Yet Chanuka's countenance was as un-



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moving as his own, as the chief continued:

"You are to seek out that largest village of the Dacotahs which lies in a great grove of walnut-trees where one big river forks into three; and you are to go in haste so that you may see their braves come home from the buffalo hunt. If their store of dried meat for the winter is scanty, they will hunger and weaken when the snows begin and sickness will go from lodge to lodge. And then, when spring comes the Ojibway will fall upon them. It is of this matter that you are to bring news, whether the Dacotah hunters come home heavily or lightly laden. By the word which you carry we will determine whether there is to be war again, or longer peace."

A journey is apt to seem shorter each time that it is repeated. Chanuka, traveling over the now familiar waterways, seemed to approach his journey's end more swiftly than either time before. It almost seemed that his paddle lagged; but brisk autumn winds and streams brimming from autumn rains carried him relentlessly onward. It was not until he had passed over half the distance that a strange question began to form itself within his mind. Was it possible that he did not wish to go so quickly? Was he a reluctant messenger; had those days upon the island in the marsh so weakened the resolution of a proper warrior that he, the first one chosen for the war-path, was going forward unwillingly? The thought stung him as though it were one of the wild black bees who were gathering their final store of honey



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in the sheets of yellow flowers which bordered all the streams.

He dipped his blade and sped southward with all the haste which his paddle could add to the breezes and currents behind him. Yet as he journeyed his face darkened; for ply his paddle as he would, he could not seem to leave that haunting question behind. He did not know that he was offering vain battle against a natural force far stronger than even the relentless will of an Indian warrior. Wars may last a hundred years, or a thousand; but the spirit of fellowship which can grow up between one growing youth and another is older and more powerful than tribal hatreds.

He came to that green shore where he had left Neosho; and from there hastened forward on foot until he came in sight of the forks of the big river and saw the Dacotah lodges scattered through the grove of walnut trees. From daybreak until evening he lay in hiding on the opposite side of the stream, watching all those who went back and forth amongst the lodges or came down to the bank for water. At first it was plain that only squaws and children and old men inhabited the place, that all the young and able-bodied braves were still away hunting the buffalo. Chanuka's chief had timed well the sending of his messenger; for the boy had waited only a night and a day before he witnessed the return of the hunters.

They advanced across the plain in a cloud of dust, a long line of laden ponies and weary huntsmen. From



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the shouts and from the delight with which they were greeted by those who ran out to meet them and escort them to their own lodges, it seemed that the chase had been crowned with success. Of that, however, Chanuka could not be certain until he stole nearer. This it was his plan to do on the night when the Dacotahs lit their ceremonial fires on the flat bank just across from him and made ready to dance the Buffalo Dance.

Another warrior, so Chanuka reflected, might be content to watch and spy and carry home his news gathered only by observing from a distance. But he was determined to steal through the whole village, to peer into every lodge, and to carry away, perhaps from the dwelling of the chief, some token of actual proof that he had walked among the very camp-fires of the enemy. A beaded pouch, a bow or a carved pipe, something he must surely have to bear away. Had not his chief said that he who seeks out the country of the enemy must not come home empty-handed? The darkness of the chosen night had fallen and the women were preparing the heaps of wood for the circle of fire, when he slipped into the river to swim silently across.

He came out dripping, and crouched under the low bank to listen. All the voices and movement were on the flat ground to the right of him, where the whole village seemed to be gathering. He found his way to a break in the slope of the shore and, under the scanty cover of wild blackberries and hickory brush, he crept unnoticed to the very edge of the camp. The lodges stood tenant-



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less, with the embers of spent fires dying before every door. He peered into one empty dwelling, then another and another. It was even as he had guessed from afar, the stores were plenty; the hunt had been successful. The Dacotahs were rich indeed this season with dried meat and buffalo robes; there would be no starving when the winter came.

He had reached the very center of the camp and was looking about him to determine which was the chief's lodge, the most worthy dwelling to be plundered. It would be easy to bear away anything that he wished; for every living soul, it seemed was on the open ground beside the river. A sudden tumult of voices almost at his elbow startled him into the knowledge that he was mistaken.

From the Medicine Lodge below the biggest walnut-tree there came forth a group of laughing, shouting warriors. The dull fire behind them and the light of the stars above showed him that here was the Medicine Man himself, with an escort of young braves, walking down through the lodges, to appear the last of all beside the river, and to give the signal for the dance to begin.

The young men spread their line out through the camp, perhaps to see whether every person had gone. There was nothing for Chanuka to do but to give way before them, slipping from one shadow to another, taking advantage of any possible cover, but still being driven steadily down toward that space of light and tumult where the whole village was gathered. In absolute des-



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peration he took refuge at last under the edge of a great pile of firewood..

The shouting warriors passed close beside him. One of them even stopped, seemed to hesitate a moment, and then went on with the others. An old brave came hobbling up to the opposite side of the heap of fuel and gathered an armful to fling upon the fire just kindled not ten yards away. The flare of red light showed the crowding women and children, the warriors in their feathered headdresses, and the fringed branches of the walnut-trees moving softly in the rush of hot air. It would be impossible now to slip from that hiding-place and reach the river unseen. From time to time more wood was thrown upon the fire, keeping the light ablaze and steadily lessening Chanuka's only cover. The drums thumped under the trees; the Medicine Man's voice rose in slow chant. The dance was about to begin.

Of a sudden, Chanuka, tense as a whipcord, felt a touch upon his arm. He started; in the pressure of his excitement he might have cried out. Some one was stooping over him, a queer misshapen figure quite unrecognizable in the firelight. But the voice which spoke Chanuka's name in a whisper was Neosho's.

At such highly wrought moments minds move quickly, and understanding comes without need of words. Neosho, it seemed, was to take the part of the horse, in the coming dance. Crouching low at the edge of the heap of wood, he wrapped about his former comrade the sheltering garment of horse-hide and thrust into



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his hands the wooden skin-covered likeness of a horse's head. Already the brave who was to take the part of the buffalo was dancing and stamping his slow way around the circle inside the ring of fires. Every eye was upon that moving figure with its tossing horns and lashing tail. One round the buffalo was to make alone, then was to be followed by the horse, then by the hunter. So intent were all the spectators about the fires that no one noted the brief pause before the horse came out from the shadows and the second dancer joined the first.

As has been said, Chanuka had seen the dance before, watching from afar across the stream. It was well for him that an Indian's mind is trained to notice and to store up every detail which his eye has once seen. With his heart hammering against his ribs, and with his eyes peering desperately through the holes in the clumsy head, Chanuka set himself to imitate the stamping dance step of the man before him, while he moved the horse's head, up and down, up and down, just as he had seen the dancer, a year ago, imitate the jogging motion of a loping pony. In that breathless moment during which Dacotah and Ojibway had changed places, Neosho's quick eye had noted one detail which might have betrayed them both. He had kicked off his beaded moccasins, and had pointed to Chanuka's, cut and embroidered in a different fashion and proclaiming his tribe to any watchful eye. The long limbed plainsman was larger than the lad of the forest, so that now Chanuka, dancing for his life, found the moccasins awkwardly big as he





The horse disappeared beyond the curtain of darkness



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jerked and shuffled forward in the wake of the shuffling buffalo.

He had circled the ring of flickering red light, and now, from a shout behind him, knew that the hunter had joined the other two and that all interest and every glance was centered upon the final dancer alone. Once more they made the circuit, the three together. It seemed to the panting boy wrapped in the heavy horse-hide that the round of fire-lit grass had stretched to the compass of a mile. But at last he saw the buffalo stop, look backward over his shoulder and then step aside to mingle with the crowd. A few more steps he danced; then, where the spectators had dwindled to a broken line on the rough footing just above the river bank, the horse also slipped out of the circle and disappeared beyond the curtain of darkness that hung beyond the fire.

There was a soft splash in the water, as though a great fish had jumped. It attracted the attention of a single lean, young warrior who alone turned to listen, and who, presently, edged his way to the brink of the river and there gathered up an abandoned horse-hide and the rudely fashioned model of a horse's head. Although he stood, silent and hearkening, for long minutes, there was no sound to be heard above the drums, no hint of a wet, supple figure clambering out of the stream on the opposite bank, and setting forth to bear a message northward.

It was three days later that Chanuka stood before his chief again and gave the news that the Dacotah tribe had had good hunting and that this was no time to pre-



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pare for renewing the war. The other heard him, frowning.

"And how do I know that you really traveled so far, that you speak the truth when you say that you actually peered into the Dacotah lodges beside the river?" he asked.

"By these," returned Chanuka briefly. He held up a pair of buffalo-hide moccasins, beaded and ornamented after a pattern never used by an Ojibway. And from the lodge pole of a certain dwelling of the Dacotahs, there swung at that same moment, a pair of smaller moccasins, embroidered with bright porcupine quills, such as are worn by the forest hunters. For long years they hung there, the silent witness of a friendship of which no word had ever been spoken aloud.



Swift Thunder of the Prairie

by Lois Maloy

LITTLE STAR-BROTHER looked for a long time after the one he called Swift Thunder of the Prairie. He did not turn the head of his pony toward his village until the train had gone out of sight, and there was nothing to be seen except the low cloud of smoke which lay over the plain.

Little Star-Brother was the grandson of Chief War Cloud. He lived in a tipi made of buffalo hide with his father and his mother, his brother and his baby sister. Nearby was the tall tipi where his grandfather and his grandmother lived. His father was a brave with many feathers. Some day, Little Star-Brother resolved, he would be a great chief like his grandfather. He would have a war bonnet of so many feathers that they would reach to the ground. He would paint on the skin side of a buffalo robe the many deeds he had done.

Little Star-Brother was only eight, and so he had not



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yet earned his grown-up name. He was called Little Star-Brother because, when it was dark and there were many stars in the sky, he would ask his grandfather question after question about the star legends. He looked up into the sparkling heavens where the Happy Hunting Grounds were. In the milky path across the sky, a star shone for each brave who had gone to hunt there. His grandfather said it was good for him to ask questions—for thus he could learn the lore of earth and sky and the wise ways of living.

Some day he would win another name—a brave's name to show he was strong and fearless. First he must practice being very brave and strong so that he could win his name when the time came. He was always racing with the other boys of the village, on foot or on horseback. Winning, too.

Now there was one he could not beat, and that was Swift Thunder of the Prairie. But to beat Swift Thunder, he would have to be as fleet as a prairie wolf. More—he must learn to fly like an arrow from a sprung bow.

How he would have loved to go hunting buffalo with the braves who were starting off as he reached the village! But Little Star-Brother had to stay home with the women and the other children. At least he did not have to help dress buffalo skins for tipis and clothing or to make things of beads as the girls did. No! Already he could make believe he was a mighty hunter of buffalo.

Like the other boys, he could clutch the hard body of his pony with tensed knees and feet alone. He could



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lean far down along the pony's side and shoot arrows from his bow. So, in a real buffalo hunt, the braves rode. In that way they hoped to fool the buffalo into thinking their ponies were only a herd of wild horses. Little Star-Brother rode hard. He was pretending the target of buffalo hide was a real buffalo.

The dogs yelped; the boys yelled; the ponies' feet drummed over the hard floor of the prairie. Clouds of dust rose from the ground. Every little prairie-dog, you may be sure, was safe in his burrow.

By the time the hunters were seen coming home in the sunset, the boys were ready for a good dinner of buffalo meat. Now if only the braves had had good hunting, there would be a feast. It would not take the hungry men long to carve the carcasses with their sharp hunting knives. The women already had the fires built and stones heating in them, so there would be plenty of hot stones to heat the water in the buffalo skins where the meat would be cooked. Little Star-Brother could imagine that he could taste a good dinner of fresh buffalo meat. His mouth watered.

But the hunters had found no buffalo, although they had ridden all day over the prairie. They were tired and hungry and very, very cross. Now they would have only dried buffalo meat for dinner. Little Star-Brother was extremely tired of pemmican.

The braves had not much to say around the fire that night as they chewed on the hard pieces of pemmican. No one laughed or joked as they did after a day of good



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hunting. There were no bones for the dogs and they growled and snarled at each other.

Little Star-Brother's eyes as he watched were as wide-awake as the eyes of a fox puppy in his hole, as the old warriors and the young braves held council around the fire. Chief War Cloud sat in the circle with the others. No brave, no warrior, not even the chief wore feathers or any mark of honor, for all were alike around the council fire, from the chief to the youngest brave.

The chief's face was as though it were carved of red pipe-stone. Beside him crouched the medicine-man, and his black eyes were glittering like beads under his red-painted lids.

A brave spoke:

"Friends and Relatives:

"For tens upon tens of snows have the fathers of our people hunted over the prairie. Many buffalo have they killed, but the herd has not decreased, and of buffalo there have been plenty for the use of our people. The flesh of the buffalo has nourished us from before the memory of man. His skin is the robe to keep us warm from the North Wind, and the tipi to shelter us from the blizzard.

"Then the white man came and drove us back from our hunting grounds with his fire-sticks. These our fathers fought and the scalps of many white men dangled from their shields. But the white men built their towns and lived in them. And as our fathers have done,



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we have taken our tipi and moved to the place where there were many buffalo."

The brave spoke no more.

Another continued:

"Then the white men laid down a river of iron across the prairie. Upon it rides a monster who comes across the prairie like a cyclone, roaring with a voice of thunder. The buffalo he has driven away and the herds he has scattered. The children of War Cloud, though they move the tipi from valley to hill, find no buffalo for their meat. What, O War Cloud, are we to do?"

Chief War Cloud spoke in his deep, wise voice.

He said, "My brothers: you who are old—whose hair is covered with the frost of many snows, remember well the days when the Indian went out against the white man to try to drive him from the prairie. How the fire sticks of the white man were bad medicine for the Indian, and the white man had many weapons that the Indians did not know. Though we took many scalps, the white man came like the snowflakes on the North Wind. Can we fight the North Wind, and keep the snow from covering the ground in winter? No—we will have to move on and try to find more buffalo—away from the white man's monster. Our wise men have counselled it, and have smoked the Pipe of Peace with the messenger of the Great White Father who is the chief of the white man's nation. Is there any other course?"

There was much talk after this by braves who could



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not see the wisdom of War Cloud's words. They were young braves like Red Arrow who wanted to fight and show their bravery so they could win many feathers.

Red Arrow tossed and turned all night. He was dreaming that he was a great warrior. He dreamed that he had taken the scalps of so many white men that they went away forever from the prairie. And then he was a great chief!

But Little Star-Brother slept like the babe laced in her cradle. The whistle of the little engine awakened him.

"Hoo-roo-ooh!" it called.

Little Star-Brother rubbed his eyes, and looked about him. All were sleeping—except Red Arrow, his brother. Red Arrow had gone and Red Arrow's pony was gone, too!

Little Star-Brother leapt upon his pony. He looked far over the prairie. In the distance he could see Red Arrow on his pony. He was going to the place where Little Star-Brother raced Swift Thunder of the Prairie every morning. What was Red Arrow going to do there?

Little Star-Brother dug his heels into the pony's flanks and galloped after Red Arrow. Now the thunder of the engine's approach could be heard. On and on Swift Thunder came—faster than the stampeding buffalo—faster than wild horses—faster than the wind! He was painted like a warrior and crowned with fire and plumes of smoke greater than the war bonnet of a chief—and his war cry was louder than the cries of all the warriors



Swift Thunder of the Prairie

together. But Little Star-Brother was not afraid of Swift Thunder of the Prairie.

Red Arrow had disappeared behind a rock. Was he hiding there? The train thundered down the track toward the rock. Little Star-Brother galloped as fast as he could. But he could not reach Red Arrow before the train came to the rock.

And then he saw an arrow fly out and strike Swift Thunder of the Prairie. It went to the very place where the ruddy-faced man rode high.

But the train did not stop. It continued down the track, whistling its war cry.

Red Arrow on his pony appeared from behind the rock. He was so angry that he shot another arrow at the back of the train. But it was no use, the arrow fell uselessly on the track. Red Arrow would not even bother to pick it up, so chagrined was he. He turned his pony and saw Little Star-Brother there.

"Why did you shoot at Swift Thunder of the Prairie?" asked the little boy.

"Because he is a monster! Because he frightens the buffalo, and there is no hunting. There is not even enough to eat. It is all right for the old warriors to talk—but how are we young braves to win our feathers if they will not even let us fight? We might as well be women!"

And he galloped over the prairie toward the village. Little Star-Brother followed slowly. He did not know what to think of it all.



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Day and night Swift Thunder went back and forth over the prairie safely. When Little Star-Brother heard his voice early in the morning, he would arise and leave the tipi. He would gallop over the prairie to meet the little engine. He would wave his hand at Michael and race the little engine down the track. But the little engine always won!

Red Arrow stayed in the village. He kept the arrows he had so proudly dyed red in his quiver and shot no more after the train. He held much talk with the three young braves—talk which Little Star-Brother did not hear. But day after day they looked crosser and crosser as they came home from hunting buffalo. For they found few buffalo and had to eat much pemmican.

Together they thought of a plan—a wonderful plan to bring back the buffalo. It was a plan to rid the prairie of the little engine and his train. They decided to tell no one of their plan; the old warriors would only say it was foolish and they would be forbidden to carry it out. But it would be a different story when the deed was done—there would be good hunting again and everyone would be happy. Everyone would praise the young braves then, and they would win new feathers.

So it happened that one morning when Little Star-Brother awoke, he saw that again Red Arrow had arisen before him. His pony was gone, and this time Little Star-Brother could not see him speeding in the distance across the prairie.

His heart pounded “tom-ti-tom-tom” like the beat of



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the tom-tom. He heard the sound of the little engine's whistle—far in the distance. Little Star-Brother and his pony sped down the track. Perhaps he would find Red Arrow hiding behind the rock, as he had been before.

Little Star-Brother rode on faster and faster. His pony whinnied his excitement. Flecks of froth flew back over his neck and flying mane. Little Star-Brother could feel his pony's wet, hot body under him.

Swift Thunder of the Prairie was still far away when Little Star-Brother reached the rock. Red Arrow was not to be seen. But Little Star-Brother saw that something had happened—something that would wreck Swift Thunder of the Prairie! There was a large stone on the track, a stone far too big and too heavy for him to push away, though he leaped off his pony and tugged and pushed at it.

Swift Thunder of the Prairie came on and on, with his black cone of smoke like a cyclone. Little Star-Brother ran up the track, waving his arms and yelling at the advancing engine.

Michael O'Halloran had looked for the little Indian boy and his pony as he crossed the prairie. But he had not seen him, and there had been no race. Funny! He rather missed him—

There he was now—ahead on the track, waving his arms! He'd be run down! What was he trying to do? Michael pulled the whistle-cord.

"Hoo-roo-oo-hoo! Hoo-roo-hoo! Get off the track!" the little engine called.



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But Little Star-Brother did not get off the track. He kept on waving his arms. He jumped up and down. The engine kept coming on.

At last Michael pulled on the brake lever!

The little engine huffed and puffed. The wheels squealed. The cars swayed and creaked. Ladies in hoop-skirts fell off the seats—with the greatest lack of dignity. Little boys lost their round hats, little girls bumped their noses. Fat, jolly gentlemen fell into the laps of thin, cranky gentlemen and made them very, very cranky indeed!

But the train did stop in time—

“Gee whillikens!” said Tim Flynn.

Michael’s blue eyes were popping.

“It’s the little Injun! And there’s a big boulder on the track! Why—we’d have been wrecked but for that little Injun!”

So there the little engine stood, like an iron horse panting after a long run. Little puffs of steam still went up from his escape valves. Each window of the orange coaches framed the head of a passenger curious to see what had happened.

As Mr. Hopkins, the conductor, hurried forward through the train, a chorus of voices questioned him.

“What’s the matter? What’s wrong? What’s the trouble?”

Mr. Hopkins had little to say, except—

“Don’t know, sir! Don’t know, Ma’am!”



Swift Thunder of the Prairie

Then the shrill voice of one of the little boys cried, "There's an Indian!"

"Indian! Heaven save us, we'll all be scalped!" said one of the fat, jolly gentlemen in a not-very-jolly voice.

"Oh, dear—Indians!" cried the little girls.

"Indians? Scalped? Oo-ooh!"

Ladies fainted. Smelling salts were waved under their noses, and there was much fluttering of fans.

"It's an outrage!" stormed one of the thin, cranky gentlemen.

"Indians! We'll be scalped! Tomahawked! Burned at the stake!" said another.

"Oh, mercy sakes, can't somebody *do* something?" cried a very fat lady.

"Outrage!" the thin, cranky gentleman kept repeating.

"We'll see!" said a long, tall gentleman with a deep voice.

He got up and followed Mr. Hopkins out of the train.

Michael was standing down by the track, and the little Indian was looking up at him—a lad of seven or eight. The lad was making many signs with his hands—trying hard to tell Michael something. But Michael only scratched his red head.

"What's wrong?" asked Mr. Hopkins.

"Well," said Michael, "there's a boulder around by that rock there. We'd have been wrecked but for this little Injun here!"



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Mr. Hopkins looked around cautiously. He put his hand to the holster where he carried his gun.

"Any more of them around? How did the boulder get there? It couldn't have just rolled over to the track by itself."

"I don't know," was all Michael could tell him. "I can't make out what this little redskin is trying to tell me—" Michael shook his head.

The long, tall gentleman stepped forward.

"May I help? I'm the Indian agent—Pennypacker's my name. I'm on my way to see Mr. Robinson, the station-master in Buffalo Valley—"

"Good, Mr. Pennypacker! The message reached you, then!" said Michael O'Halloran.

Then Mr. Pennypacker talked with Little Star-Brother in his own language, and gave him a message to give his grandfather, Chief War Cloud.

While they talked, Michael and Tim Flynn rolled the boulder off the track, and made sure everything was safe and sound. Mr. Hopkins was looking along the track and around by the rock. He was carrying his pistol in his hand.

As no Indians appeared, some of the braver passengers ventured forth. Even one or two of the little boys slipped away from watchful mothers and came to stare with round eyes at Little Star-Brother and his befeathered paint pony.

Finally, above the voices of Mr. Pennypacker and Little Star-Brother another voice was heard. It was the



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voice of the thin, cranky gentleman. As he appeared in the doorway, his face was angry and red. It glowed like a fire in a stove under his tall stovepipe hat.

"It's an outrage!" he was shouting. "There's no excuse for this delay! No excuse at all, I say! I'll miss my appointment in Buffalo Valley! And I'll report this delay the very moment I get there!"

Then, before anyone saw it happen—the stovepipe hat was whisked off his head. There was an arrow sticking through the crown—a red arrow!

And from behind the rock four young braves whipped up their ponies and, like lightning, galloped over the prairie toward their village.

"Red Arrow!" cried Little Star-Brother.

"Indians!" cried the passengers.

"Outrage!" shouted the thin, cranky gentleman.

Around the fire that night they listened to the words of Chief War Cloud and Mr. Pennypacker.

Mr. Pennypacker said in his deep, kind voice:

"I bring you the greeting of the Great White Father, Chief of the white man's nation. He bids me to bring you the message of his good will.

"I am a white man, but as a child I slept in the tipi and learned to hunt with bow and arrow. I grew to be a brave of my tribe: Running Deer is my Indian name. There was a massacre of a wagon train; I was the only one of that company left alive. A brave brought me to his village, and his wife laced me in a cradle and car-



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ried me as you were carried upon the backs of your mothers.

"I learned the legends and the language of the tribe. Since, I have learned many tongues and have sat at the fires of the Seven Council Fires.

"The white man's nation is great and mighty, but it is the desire of the Great White Father that there should be peace between the white man and the Indian."

The talk went on for a long time. War Cloud spoke for the tribe because he was known far and wide as a great orator.

And Mr. Pennypacker spoke of what had brought him; of the railroad, the red arrow, and the stone on the track. Did these things mean there might be trouble now between the Indians and the railroad? There had once been a council before to settle the matter, and the Pipe of Peace had been smoked.

Chief War Cloud held his head high, proud as an eagle. But he had to be silent, for he knew nothing of the red arrow or any other attack on the train. The whole tribe sat quiet, too.

There was Red Arrow looking down at the ground. There was Little Star-Brother in the door of the tipi. But the only sound was that of the crackling fire, and a prairie wolf out on the plain.

The eyes of the chief pierced the very heart of each brave, one by one. His feathered head rotated without movement of his shoulders, like an eagle. He looked at Red Arrow, whose eyes had fallen away from his glance.



Swift Thunder of the Prairie

"Red Arrow, do you know the meaning of this?"

Poor Red Arrow! Little Star-Brother could hardly bear to look at him. It took a very *brave* brave indeed to face those fiery eyes fastened upon him!

The fire crackled. At last Red Arrow looked up at the chief—straight at him.

"Yes," he answered in a low voice. "I wanted to do a great deed for the tribe. I wanted to drive the railroad away, so the buffalo would come back. So I shot the arrow—and pushed the stone on the track!"

All the lessons Red Arrow had learned, all the suffering he had done to become a brave, were nothing to what he learned now under the eye of his grandfather. He never forgot the lesson he learned then—even after he had himself become a great chief and wore a war bonnet like War Cloud's.

"It is good for the young brave to do great deeds and to win honors! But he belongs to the tribe, his bravery is its bravery and his honor is the tribe's honor. Even as he must keep his word, the tribe must keep its word. The young brave must obey the law of the tribe and the word of the wise man, until he too learns wisdom. It is the way of the Indian."

Three other young braves, too, confessed their part in the adventure, and it was a black, bitter moment. Bad enough to have had their adventure, planned with such high hopes, turn out so poorly. But worse to have to bear their disgrace under the eyes of a white man as well as those of the chief and all the braves!



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The white man who had grown up with Indians for brothers knew how hard it was for them. His deep voice broke the black silence.

He spoke of Little Star-Brother: how his action had saved the lives of many people.

"I will report the bravery of your grandson, Little Star-Brother, to the Great White Father," he promised.

Chief War Cloud answered, "Little Star-Brother is only a little boy, not yet a brave. He will grow up in a new time, when the Indian will learn the way of the white man. His children and his children's children will learn to speak the tongue of the white man, and will fight by his side in battle."

The chief's eyes looked as though they were seeing far through the darkness. He stretched out his hand.

"And over the prairie more railroads will come, and more white men will come with them. Where the buffalo now roam, the white man will settle and plant maize, the gift of the Great Spirit to the red man. And the red man will learn the way of the white man."

Even to the ears of the white man at the council fire, the words of War Cloud had a sad sound.



Winged Feet

by Gertrude Robinson

HUDDLED IN ONE of the Post's red and black check blankets, sat Quinneban, a brown and wrinkled statue. He wore the blanket, not because he liked the white man's trash, but because he could buy and resell at a profit a dozen of the rough wool things for one well-tanned deer skin or bear skin.

In his hand was his long chief's pipe with its dangling strands of shredded deer skin, fringed and decorated with dyed porcupine quills. When he put the wooden stem in his mouth and puffed, a blue haze emerged from the carved stone bowl and encircled his seamed face. Through the mist his darting black eyes questioned now this one, now that one of the men who squatted with him about the stone fireplace. There was a constant coughing and wheezing because Quinneban liked the rank dried leaves of Indian pokeweed mixed with his tobacco.



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In the lodge on the east side of the river his people still thought of as the Quinnebequi, though the white men called it the Kennebec, were six old men and his young grandson Squando. Only a few of Quinneban's own people and one white man, Sangman Snow of Falmouth, and his son Nathan, knew where to find this lodge. It was simply a brown wart in deep woods of fir and juniper and hackmatack, with a high ledge shielding its faint wisp of smoke, made by the old chief's fire, from those who might pass on the river. Here, with Natanis, an old Tarantine medicine man, but now a man of no tribe, Quinneban sat and bided his time till his heart-son, young Squando, should be strong enough to call the scattered remnants of the Norridgewock people together again.

There were few of the Norridgewock, or any of the Quinnebequi peoples, who once had lived up and down the Kennebec Valley, left. Fifty years before they had been driven out of their ancient village on the bend of the Kennebec to the north, and the few who had not gone up to Canada were in hiding. Partly because they distrusted the English; partly because they distrusted more and more each turn of the sun those of their own tribespeople who had dwelt for too many years in that strange melting-pot of tribes on the St. Francis River, far to the northwest. They wanted no visitors from their once blood-relatives who had abandoned not only their tribe, but its ways and its thoughts.

Now there was a new hope dawning in the hearts of



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Quinneban and his few old men and still fewer young men. There was a Great Father in Cambridge, Sangman George Washington. He was wiser than the English and it was written by the spirits with whom Natanis sometimes talked that the Americans were to get and hold all this land. From the mighty river to the west where dwelt the Mohawks, the evil wolves, even to the St. Croix on the east where dwelt the tame sheep, the Passamaquoddies, the hateful flag of the English with its red, white and blue cross in which they had no faith was to come down, and the new American flag was to wave.

But first. . . .

Quinneban took his long pipe from his mouth and while the blue haze yet curled above his head he placed the handle in the outstretched hand of Natanis. From Natanis it went around the circle, and at last even to Squando, who had never before been permitted to sit in the council of the old ones.

When it was back in his hand Quinneban spoke: "To me has come word. It is *anrasi*, the truth. When the year died the Sangman Arnold was before Quebec which the English wrongfully took from our brothers, the French, fifteen rounds of the sun ago. He was more brave than wise and he failed."

A murmur of astonishment went around the circle.

"For reason have we been told what is not the truth. He yet sits in the snow before the walls of the great *sdaine* and owns not that he is beaten. That one should



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the Great Sangman in Cambridge watch well, for he is one who thinks of his own name. For pride he lets his men bleed for nothing because he yet tarries. Now should he return while the waters are yet frozen and wings of ice can carry them before the deep winter snows come."

Quinneban put his pipe back in his mouth and gave a mighty puff.

In the vast curl of blue smoke his face beneath its black headband with an owl's curving feather at the back floated like a stern question mark.

"*Ma ansi!*" went up from six throats.

Squando alone was silent.

Quinneban turned his darting black eyes, in which a pinpoint of flame always seemed to smoulder, toward his daughter's son.

"Well it is you speak not, *nnemann*, my son. The young may have long ears but slow tongues. Yet now you reveal to all what you this morning heard."

Squando stood before the old chief, tall as any man there, though he was scant fifteen and they were all heavy with many winters.

"Father of my mother," he began, and saw that the little flame in Quinneban's eyes flickered sharply. He knew he had done well. These old ones needed to remember that he was son of Quinneban's daughter and on him would fall the headship of the remnant of their people when the time came. "Last night as I ran hunting the fat raccoon in the woods above our old *sdaine* I



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heard a cry. It was that of the hunting *loup cervier* when no lynx is now in those woods. When an answer came from the west beyond the river I knew it for the voice of Anasou, the Pennacook, who often ranges there. He can make the cry of the she-lynx. But Anasou was a fool because no she-lynx would be then abroad. Perhaps Anasou thinks we do not know the ways of beasts."

A shrill cackle of laughter answered him.

"You learned your lessons well, son of Quinneban's daughter." Natanis, who had been medicine man to all the river tribes even before the burning of Norridge-wock, leaned back, his hands resting on his medicine pouch. "What did you when you thus heard the lynx, who was no lynx, calling his she?"

"I hid in the thicket near the first sound. Soon came one across the ice and to meet him came another. By his speech he was from St. Francis, one of the few who took refuge there before our own people began to flee before the English firing arms."

"What said they?" Quinneban was again smoking, as always when he was thinking hard thoughts behind his restless eyes. "Tell all in few words, for night comes soon."

Squando's heart leaped. By this sign he knew that Quinneban meant to assent to the thing he proposed doing.

"They revealed that Anasou, who is yet held in favor by Sangman Washington, is to go himself to Cambridge to the Great Father's camp with word that is not true.



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By swift ways on a horse from his hide-away back of Falmouth will he go to Cambridge."

"*Sawgut! Sawgut!*" went up in a long-drawn sigh of horror from six throats.

"He from St. Francis said it was true that Arnold had struck and failed and was himself wounded and Montgomery dead and the others who led desired a swift return rather than a winter siege.

"The British were growing stronger daily, but the American Sangman was too proud to see it and listened to evil counsel. Meanwhile, this one and other scouts from St. Francis had been bought by the British. The plan was for them to make swift way to the Great Father and beguile him with stories of success of Arnold before Quebec instead of the truth. Before Arnold's own scouts could reach Cambridge these would be there. They were to tell the Great White Father that now, while the British are thinking all will wait till spring, is the time to strike. They are to make the Great White Father believe that a troop sent up to the north by way of the Connecticut and striking, under their guidance, to the northeast can go more easily than by the Kennebec route. Thus would he terrify Quebec into surrender. . . . And they do not say that along that way, if they escape the rivers and the snows, the St. Francis people will be in waiting for those who yet live."

"*Sawgut! Sawgut!*" Quinneban's hand was on Squando's lean young shoulder. "And what would you, a gristle sapling, ask of us?"



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"I would go on skates down the river, now that it is all ice to the very mouth. To tell what I have heard to one who is there in camp today and tonight, but will be gone tomorrow.

"Tomorrow dawn must he have word to carry with him. He was left with his men, six in all, to have boats and horses in readiness for any wounded sent home by Arnold or for his scouts. Now has he orders, as came to my father in his lodge at Teconnet, to return with all speed to Cambridge before the great snows of the wise ones' promise. If he knows the truth by dawn he can bear word with him, as he goes fleetly, that the scouts coming down from the northeast are false friends, serving the side that pays them most. If he knows not in time, many of our friends who wish us well may be sent out by the Great Sangman to fall into the trap set by St. Francis traitors."

Quinneban shook his great owl's plume. "You have no skates such as the English and Americans use as wings for their feet. Your bone blades would crumple, short of thirty leagues."

"At the Post to the east are English skates made fast to stout shoes, so large an Indian's foot will go in, moccasin and all."

Quinneban rose from his seat on a pile of furs and walked to the wall. From it he took a white deer skin, soft and pliant as silk.

"It is worth a chief's ransom," he said, "but not too much for saving the honor of my far-off tribesmen who



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would do the Great Father wrong. But how buy you these skates? They will not sell to you, since you are of my people. The trader yonder is also no friend to the Americans. He sells the tea which is *mattanit* to them, and one St. Francis spy is due there even now with furs, and also to gather with his wampum what word he may."

"Nathan can buy them for me." Squando looked from one to the other of the six, and back to Quinneban, who already knew what he was about to say. "Nathan guided a trader from the stockade at Falmouth to the Post yonder. He stopped on his way back to see me, since he found me not at Teconnet. He has skates, but one is broken and would not serve . . . except to make him buyer of another pair."

"But the skin? Lane the trader knows it and has tried to buy it. He will know it comes from Quinneban," objected Natanis.

"Nathan will say Quinneban owes his father much, and that the skin is forfeit to his father."

Quinneban nodded, and Squando stepped to the door and called.

In a second Nathan was beside him. Quinneban looked at the boy with his fair, sun-bleached hair and bronzed face and his eyes blue as a clear June sky. He was not quite as tall as Squando, but stockier, and with a slight limp.

"He would not fly down the river as fast as you, *nnemann*, but I would his skates were fit. He might keep



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within crying distance of you—if need came. The river is evil.

“Go, see what you can do at the Post.” Quinneban nodded to one of his men who flung the deer skin over Nathan’s arm.

Nathan sped like a startled cat. It would, they knew, take him two hours to make his way to the Post and back.

Hardly had he gone when Natanis was at Squando. His fur tunic and leggings were stripped from him and his lean body rubbed with raccoon and bear grease till it shone like polished wood, and then smeared with red ocher from powdered earth and hemlock, soaked in oil. Then, wrapped in a huge bear skin, he flung himself on the bed of fir boughs and skins and slept, his stomach full of quantities of hot venison stew.

Three hours later he wakened. Nathan was back, on his knees, as he squatted beside the bed, the great boots with their shining skates made fast with bolts and straps.

“I tried them,” he cried, “and they are perfect, though they do pinch my broad English feet here and there. I would mine were fit to skate on and we could fly together.”

An hour before sunset Squando was ready to start. On the upper stretches of the river there would be none to see him, or to suspect his errand if a meeting chanced. He drank a great bark cup of pungent wintergreen and sassafras tea and ate sparingly of hot *nawsaump* and roast bear meat, which Natanis said gave more strength



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than any other meat, even wildcat. It was time for the skates. He stood, in fur from head to boots. Not a tag or loose wisp about him to delay his speed. In his pouch he carried little bags of dried meat, powdered and mixed with cranberries and blueberries, and other bags with strips of dried bear meat. There was also a skin flask with a little of Natanis' precious potion that he spent half his days brewing. Bitter as the wild radish it was and a strange blue-red. There was in it no English rum, for neither Quinneban nor Squando liked the English fire-water, nor what it did to Indian throats and spirit.

As a final ceremony, Natanis smeared Squando's face with sweet white acorn oil and over the grease painted liberal layers of red ocher.

"The wind will not get through that to whittle the flesh off your bones," chuckled Natanis.

"See that you give your message to no one but him you seek," said Quinneban solemnly. "Let them not see you as you pass the forts Western and Halifax that sit beside the river, for the foolish ones harbor spies who will tell all to those who pay fat wampum. Not even your father Canassa as you pass Teconnet for he puts faith even now in Sabatis, and will not believe the Tarantines have come to love the lobster-backs better than the Norridgewocks and the Americans."

"I tell it only as you say, *Nenni-Tangos*."

Squando slung the skates over his shoulder and with Nathan went down the sloping path to the river. He did not look back, but he knew that Quinneban and Natanis



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and the six old ones went into the lodge and closed the door. Until they heard of Squando's safe arrival at the camp of the American officer, or until he returned, they would sit in solemn silence, lost in soaring wreaths of smoke. They would be saying in their hearts the words that would put speed into his runners and courage into his heart and weakness into the bones of any who might seek to stay him.

Alone, Squando and Nathan proceeded to the river banks, and sitting on a log Squando permitted Nathan to put the great boots on his feet and make sure the straps and bolts were firm. For a second, Squando was uncertain how to move. It was the first time his agile feet had been in anything but pliant moccasins, and they felt heavy and imprisoned.

Then miraculously he was skimming the ice. First in tryout circles. The skates were no longer strange. He took the long, oak stave Nathan had ready for him, its tip shod with steel, gave one thrust and was off. Only to be stopped by Nathan's hand on his shoulder.

"You know where this officer's hideout is? Exactly?"

"The creek, above the big island where the waters divide, a league in."

"There are two creeks there on the west side," objected Nathan. "The first is not so long. It must be the second, where we went hunting ducks in the fall. And heaven send it is near enough dawn for light so you do not miss it as you fly. There will the ice be broken and rough."



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"*Dabel-doch!*" agreed Squando over his shoulder, as he again was off.

As he went, the winds cut through his furs like whetted knives. "At the dropping of the sun the wind will change and speed your wings," Quinneban had said. If it were only true he could make good time before he reached the treacherous Three Mile Ripples where he must take off his skates and walk, unless there had been an overflow to the west into the fields on which skates could travel. Even now the red fingers were slanting downward now and then from the wooded ridges to the west. It didn't matter if he were seen. Friends and enemies alike would think it was the English officer's boy—for as such the people of the woods still thought of Commandant Snow at Falmouth. They would think he was trying out the skates he had purchased at the price of a sagamore's ransom. Already, though Squando did not know it, the white skin had a buyer—none other than the agent of General Howe, the British commander in Boston. His escort was at the mouth of the river but he had journeyed inland, partly to stop off at Lane's Post to buy what he could for a song, partly to hear what he might.

One of the thirty leagues gone. So far it was flying, but soon would come the rapids and then the Three Mile Ripples where only good luck could find him skateways at the deep curve on the west. Then there would be Fort Halifax, and then Cushnoc. He must remember to go to the west of the little island in the river there, to avoid



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Fort Western and its guards. It was a strange world in which one dared not trust even one's friends because they kept friends with those who were false. Even his father Canassa would not see that the Tarantine Sabatis was like one of those little lizards that changed color with everything they touched.

Then he became merely a flying thing. The wind had turned, even as Quinneban had promised, and it no longer cut but shoved. At times it threatened to drive him headlong into holes where springs gurgled close beneath the surface ice. It took him so fast over rough places that he hardly knew they were there till he found his skates were again biting clear ice instead of shrieking over shale. The sun was long down, and it was a clear, stinging cold night. He couldn't stop now if he would. On—on—just one thing to do. He must find an American officer waiting in his tent for the dawn, to start west. Without the truth in his keeping to help the Great Father know false from true when St. Francis traitors brought him word at Cambridge, unless these skates were wings. There was no snow, nothing but ice to make it easy to cross the rivers and the lakes, and nothing could overtake the officer, once he was off. His horses were fleet, and unless these skates held, and his luck, The Great Father would be sending men north to be trapped like driven beasts.

On—on—skates clanging to the rhythm of *Angsanmsae! Angsanmsae!* Now or never! Now or Never!

His legs had no joints. He had long ceased to shove



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ahead with the stout stick but held it behind him, with arms clasped, as a handle for the wind to take and wield as it would.

Two leagues, three leagues, four leagues, five leagues, six leagues—twenty leagues! That was the most any Indian skater with bone skates had ever made between sunrise and sunset. Between sunset and sunrise he must with English skates make thirty.

Twenty leagues, and it was now well past the turn of the night. By using his stick as a brake Squando managed to slow down enough to be able to pull one of the bags of pemmican from his pouch and get a mouthful to chew. He was thirsty and the berries in it slaked his thirst a little. He was now nearing the third rapids. There would he find water in pools with thin ice over the top which he could break. The wind was changing again. Once it slung him completely about and headed him back toward Cushnoc, a league or so behind him. At the rapids there was, as he had hoped, clear ice at the far side. He slowed down until he was able to drop full-length beside one of the springs that gurgled water. Tortured as he was with thirst he allowed himself only a couple of palmfuls. Then he was up, already a little stiffened by the cold, and struggling to get flexibility again into his legs. Two more leagues. Far behind him now was Cushnoc Island where the evil ones dwelt, even though Nathan laughed at them and once had slept there alone. Maybe no one believed in evil ones any more. He had often thought Quinneban secretly laughed



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at some of Natanis' magic against them, those *mattanit* ones. Once they would all have been afraid of Nathan after he slept on Cushnoc, but now not even Natanis thought he ought to have the cleansing rites and go in the sweathouse to roast out the devils. Squando drew a long breath. It would be wonderful to be like the English and Americans and have nothing but flesh and blood to fear. Then he remembered that once he had been told those at Plymouth had hanged old women because they were what the English called witch-women, full of *mattanit* spirits. The Indian way was better, for one didn't kill the evil spirits when one killed the body they lived in.

Past Gardinierstown, twenty-five leagues gone. He began to feel, not tired, but as though his legs were flying sticks, and the old hurt in his side where he had been cut by Anasou's knife when they fought the year before started out. His head felt queer and large and he had trouble keeping his feet down on the ice. It was as though something was shoving him up, so light he was, lighter than the air, like a bird, only his wings were wrong—

Then it was he heard the ring of skates behind him. Skates swifter than his own, yet with a little catch in the ring. Nathan! It could be no other.

Nathan behind him!

Nathan beside him!

No time to ask how he got there. He slid the oak stave out to the right and felt it caught in a firm grip. The two



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swung on, and suddenly Squando felt himself again. His feet came alive and his head was steady.

Nathan was faster than he, and Quinneban had been wrong to think he was not. In spite of the little limp that made his stroke slightly uneven he could easily outdistance Squando if he would.

No one else was on the ice. It was too bitter a night even for one who must get somewhere with speed. Too bitter except for some one who must warn General Washington's man. The sun would soon be coming near the horizon. One more league to go. Then they must turn aside into the small creek that flowed in out of the hidden valley where Sangman Washington's secret agent had his camp.

Nathan was saying something. Two words that whistled out of his mouth with the speed of their going, Pierpole and Nanatuh. Squando understood as well as though Nathan had made a speech. He had Pierpole's great moosebone skates, the pride of his heart. He was one of the old ones whose days of skating were forever ended by reason not of age, but of a broken and strangely-mended hip. Natanis, and later the white doctor, had done their best by him, but it was as stiff as a frozen bone and Pierpole must forever hop. Something felt warm and happy in Squando. Pierpole had given his skates to Nathan out of love for Quinneban's daughter's son. They were carved from great moose thigh bones, and, brown and polished, were as strong and swift as steel. Pierpole had not been at the lodge when they



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talked. He had come in later from pegging a way to his traps.

But Nanatuh! The Calling Place where the spirits talked with men who came not too near! He knew what Nathan had done. Nathan had crossed the river and sped by land across the bend below Norridgewock and let himself down by the rawhide, even now wound about his waist, over the frowning ledge that faced the river. He had cut off two leagues of rough skating by the Ripples, but he had dared the spirits of the Nanatuh. Others who had tried to descend that ledge had been dashed to death—it must be that the spirits of Nanatuh were kindly to Nathan. They must even have helped him jerk the rawhide lashing free from the boulder over which he had slipped the noose in its upper end, for he could not unaided have got it free.

As though he knew what Squando was thinking Nathan spoke.

“It came down when I tugged the lashing to get it free, the boulder. There was a mighty crashing and I but escaped with Pierpole’s skates, which are mine if I bring you back safe to him and Quinneban.”

“Look, the creek!” Squando swerved a little and then drew out into the river. “The second one comes soon!”

Light in the east, and in the rosy glow the silver mirror of the second creek suddenly appeared.

With his stave Nathan slowed his flying strokes and the two turned aside into the open lane of ice. They swung in.



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There on the southern side of the creek sat three king's men in red coats, astride great horses.

"Halt!" shouted one of them. With drawn sabers the three rode out on the ice.

There was nothing to do but halt, or to appear to. Nathan gave Squando a shove to the far side of the broad creek and stuck his stave into the ice to bring his flying feet to a halt when he was abreast the horsemen.

"What do you here?" demanded the officer, "And why does he not stop?" He raised his arm to hurl the knife in his belt after the fleeing thing that was Squando.

Before Nathan could find breath with which to answer and before the officer's fingers were unclenched from the knife there was a rending, cracking sound. Beneath the weight of the horses the ice was breaking up.

Squando, as he sped over the smooth ice beyond, looked back once, and saw that Nathan had shot past the struggling trio. In a few seconds, he came abreast of Squando. On they went, swaying again with the stave between them, the squealings of the terrified and floundering horses and hoarse shouts of the men growing fainter.

On, one last league. It was still dark in the ravine through which the creek wound its way and suddenly Squando was catapulted ahead, the stave wrenched from his grasp.

He looked back, without slackening his speed more than a fraction of a stroke. What he had feared had



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happened. Nathan had struck a log, half buried in the ice, and lay in a limp huddle, his legs twisted beneath him.

In that moment Squando ceased to be a boy. Friendship had always before been first with him. Now loyalty to the man to whom his tribe had pledged allegiance came first. His heart was so heavy it seemed that his feet, too, must be lead. Yet somehow he made himself flash on, around the bend and down the last half league and so to the point where he must take off his skates and run through the crowding ranks of birch and poplar and fir to a hidden hut. His feet were so numb they felt as though they were breaking when he pulled off the great boots, and only one was off when he heard the trampling of horses.

Down through a cleverly concealed trail to the creek came George Washington's man and his six soldiers. They were riding on the ice till they found the westward way the Indians could follow blindfolded, but which only a wise white man could make his own. They were striking the ice a furlong ahead. Squando tried to yell and for the moment his throat was too dried out with the speed of his going. Frantically, he started on one skate, shoving with the other foot. The wind was with him, and so, as the last horse stepped gingerly upon the ice Squando reached it. He staggered forward, falling against the beast's kindly, broad chest, his arms clinging for support to the bending neck. The rider dismounted, and caught Squando in a firm grip but



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Squanto had no traffic with him. The officer was turning and Squanto, in a cracked voice, cried: "Sangman!! Sangman!! I have words for your ear alone." The officer rode up, looked long at Squanto and bade his men ride on, out of earshot.

In five minutes Squanto had told what he knew, and about the king's men he had surprised riding down the creek. Five more minutes and three lean men had been told to get to General Washington and take him word that would make him clap in prison the St. Francis scouts even then on their way through the Maine woods to Cambridge. And Anasou, as well. The officer and the other soldiers were going back to camp, to stay until they knew what the British had brewing about the mouth of the Kennebec.

Another five minutes, and with a great flagon of hot drink in him and his skate back on his right foot Squanto was guiding two men on horseback down the creek to the spot where he had left Nathan. Half a league, and they were about to round the bend. Beyond—Squanto was so eager he would not have heard the sound of horses, pawing the ice, had not the nearer of the two men with him caught his arm.

Cautiously Squanto crawled around the bend, flat on the ice.

There was Nathan.

He was just being lifted, sprawling but able to hold up his head, to a horse, back of a red-coated soldier. His arms about a billowing red waist, he rode down the



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creek. But as he went he turned his head ever so slightly. Back to Squando came the faint, faraway, peevish cry of the mackerel gull with Nathan's own peculiar drawing out of the final note—such as no gull ever did but so nearly what it might do that only Squando's ears knew the difference. He made his answer, a cracked half note of mewling hunger. It was the best he could do, with his throat a bone, but it served. As the fat horse moved ponderously and cautiously eastward on the ice, one of Nathan's hands lifted and waved a signal.

"No need to worry about your pal, scout," said his own brown-coated earmuffed soldier. "The British may be fools about taxes on tea and blockading the Port o' Boston, but they fight square. They aren't taking it out on the boys. As for you—" Squando didn't even hear. Sitting, skates and all, on the broad back of the black horse he was asleep, his head digging into the shoulder blades of the brown-furred American soldier who was on his way up to the camp of Washington's man.





Becky's Christmas Turkey

by Constance Lindsay Skinner



BECKY LANDERS, being the man of the family, knew that if there was to be turkey on the Christmas dinner table, she would have to provide it. And the younger members of the household had decreed turkey. With Ted, aged seven, and Ruth, aged five and a half, the point was already settled. Their mother only said,

"It would be nice to give them what they want at Christmas time. There's so little we can give the children in Kentucky—except peril." Her blue eyes, misted by sorrow, seemed to look at something a long way off.

Becky's throat contracted sharply. She could not accustom herself to the change that had come over her once playful, merry mother since that terrible day when raiding Indians from Kaskaskia had captured Rodney. Mrs. Landers was a devoted and a companionable mother to all her children, but her eldest, Rodney, had



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been a little closer to her than the others, perhaps because her husband's death had made her so much more dependent upon her son. On the frontier a boy of sixteen was a man, a hunter, a soldier, a provider and a strong arm of protection for the women and children not of his household alone but of his settlement. And in these first years of the Revolution when, on the Atlantic seaboard, two opposing ideals of government grappled like giants towering and swaying against the flushing dawn sky of freedom, a blood-red shadow was cast over Kentucky. That fierce warrior and prophet, Dragging Canoe, had warned the first white men who had purchased land in the red man's "Beloved Old Fields"—which is the meaning of the name Kentucky—that they would find it "a dark and bloody ground." Ever since the planting of the first settlement the Indians from all sides had been doing their best to fulfill Dragging Canoe's prophecy. Whole settlements had been wiped out, men, women, and children slain or carried away to whatever fate the whim of their captors might dictate—some to be murdered on the march in a moment of angry caprice, others to be burned in the Indian towns in celebration of the victory, and a few to be saved and adopted into the tribe.

"Mother," Becky said, gently, "we all know how the Indians love strength and courage and a handsome look. Those who came here as friends always admired Rod so much because he was so tall and straight and could run and jump and shoot and wrestle as well as



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any of their own boys. They didn't kill Rod, Mother. I *know* they didn't. I just *know* it."

She kissed her mother, then went swiftly across the kitchen, took down her rifle, slung her powder horn round her neck and her shot pouch at her waist, and, after adjusting her beaver cap somewhat rakishly over her mass of brown curls, she turned in the doorway and said, laughing,

"Now for the Christmas turkey!"

"Becky," her mother called after her anxiously, "don't go out of sight of the fort."

Becky waved her hand and tramped swiftly on. Mother always said that, poor, grieved, terrified Mother. But, as Becky knew, deer and turkey and buffalo did not come nosing up against the walls of the fort offering to replenish the harassed white men's larder. As her friend, the old scout Simon Kenton, often said, "Food's for life; an' if yer want food in Kaintuck today yer've got ter risk life ter git it."

It did not seem at all strange to Becky Landers that she should be setting off on this crisp white sunny twenty-fourth of December with a man's rifle over her shoulder on the dangerous quest for turkey, instead of hanging be-ribboned packages on a tree or stitching lace flounces on a party dress as most other girls of fifteen might be doing at that time. Becky had never had a "party dress"; possibly she had never even seen a lace flounce; and the preparation of any jolly entertainment in the protection and security of a civilized home was an experience she



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had never known. Becky's dress in winter was a long fringed deerskin jerkin over deerskin or fur short trousers and leggings. Her boots were moccasins. In the summer she wore a one-piece linsey-woolsey frock of her own or her mother's weaving. She danced almost as much perhaps as any belle in the proud social heights of Charleston or Philadelphia; but in every gay turn of the old English country dance she knew precisely where her rifle hung on the log wall. She could reach it in a few lithe wildcat leaps if the door flung open to let some breathless messenger shout, "Injuns! Get into the fort!" Or if, across the fiddler's merry tune, cut the low, chilling "Heh-yeh-i" of the war-whoop.

In a city or a safe country village, Becky Landers would have been called a tomboy, because she had always been fonder of boys' sports than of girlish amusements. On the frontier, her swift running and jumping, her good marksmanship, and her native intelligence on the trail—what we might call her good scout work—and her utter fearlessness had given her enviable fame. From Boonesborough and Harrodsburg to Crab Orchard the settlers knew the name of Becky Landers and respected it. To Becky, herself, she seemed in no way remarkable. She was without vanity and she had a very practical mind. When Indians had killed her father, as the caravan of which the Landers family was a part came through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, her brother Rodney, two years older than herself, had become the head of the family, its provider and protector.



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When, later, other savages had captured Rodney and taken him away, it had devolved on Becky to become the man of the family. She was that man to the best of her ability.

So far from admiring herself, Becky was reckoning her limitations as she set out after her Christmas turkey. She could hunt, yes; but she could not fight. When the frontiersmen took the warpath themselves to assist some other settlement in driving off the Indian bands, which the British Governor Hamilton of Detroit sent down on Kentucky from time to time, she was never mustered among the warriors. They called her a "girl" then. The warpath, as Simon Kenton said, was "no place fer gals." How could she ever hope to find Rod if they would not let her go with George Rogers Clark and his men when they made their raid on Kaskaskia? Becky had heard of the plans of that notable young Kentucky soldier. Clark said that the settlements in Kentucky could not stand if they remained solely on the defensive. He was for the bold stroke!

"If Virginia will only send me the powder and lead I've asked for," he had told Simon Kenton, "I'll take two hundred and fifty men and rush down on Kaskaskia and Vincennes and capture them before the enemy know we're there! They are the keys to the Illinois country. With them I'll go on and lock out the British at Detroit. Some say it's not Governor Hamilton but that queer sallow-faced devil, Major Hay, who is responsible for this Indian business. But, whoever it is, he'd send no



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more sayages down on Kentucky! If Virginia'll only send me the powder!"

Even several of the bravest men in Kentucky thought Clark's scheme a folly and Clark himself a madman. Becky didn't. They agreed with the famous scout, Kenton, who said,

"He's brave, but he's too young ter have much sense abaout a big thing like that."

Becky disagreed with them. To her, aged fifteen, Clark, who was twenty-three, was not "young." She wished that she knew him, and that he lived in Maybrook, her own settlement, instead of Louisville which was so far away.

"I believe I could make him let me go on the dash to Kaskaskia," she mused. "He'd understand."

Her mind ran on, recalling all the various things she had heard men say of Clark. For instance, they said how different he was from Daniel Boone, the other outstanding figure in Kentucky. Boone was much older, of course; and he was mild and affable, a man to be loved and trusted at sight—a wise man, too, intelligent, experienced. But Clark! Clark was the wildest "white Indian" the frontier had ever seen. He was fierce, violent, rash beyond all sanity, a man to be feared. Yet, they were forced to admit it, Clark was loved, too, and trusted. He was honest. His word was good. And he had an uncanny power over other men. The worst ruffians and bandits in Kentucky fell into line at his nod. They adored him.



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Then, too, the women had only good words for him. He was so handsome, with his well set-up body, his brownish blond hair, his finely cut mouth and powerfully shaped head, and his eyes that flashed a whitish gray in anger, or, in his pleasant moods, were as vividly and tenderly blue as the spring sky. He was kind and chivalrous always to women of all ages; and every woman in Kentucky sang his praises.

"I just *know* Clark would take me to Kaskaskia to look for Rod," said Becky to herself again.

Through the leafless boughs of the winter-stripped trees she could see the river. A stretch of unbroken level lay between the forest fringe where she stood and the bank of the broad stream. It had been a mild winter thus far. The ground was not even lightly thatched with snow, and the river was open. The sun dropped a mellow warm light from a cloudless sky. The air was still autumnal. Becky had walked rapidly for two hours and had long ago left the fort far behind. She knew that there was comparatively little danger of a raid in December. Summer was the Indian's war season. And sometimes, in the brief warm spell towards the end of autumn, the red men came down again for one last attack before winter had sealed up the land. That is why the frontiersmen called that brief warm spell "Indian summer."

While it was not likely that a war party was lurking about, Becky had kept a careful look-out for Indian signs. So far, she had not seen the trace of a human foot-



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fall on the grass and dry leaves. Nor had she seen a turkey. Now, suddenly both human beings and turkeys appeared at once! She espied a large boat on the river, swinging down mid-stream. It was apparently heading for the shore directly in front of her; and it was a white man's boat. She was about to run across the fifty yards or so of open space to the landing-place when she caught sight of turkey feathers. There was her Christmas dinner, pecking through the weeds among the thick bushes on the bank's rim! She counted them by tails—one turkey, two, three, another, more still, a flock of a dozen, perhaps eighteen! And in a few minutes the boatmen would ground on the shore, startle the whole flock and send them swiftly winging over the river, probably, and high into blue heavens of unattainable desire! It was a terrible situation for the young hunter. The low bushes were so thick that she could not see the birds themselves, only those tantalizing tails. Her only chance of bagging a turkey was to fire at once at the spot where, judging from its tail feathers, the nearest turkey should be.

Becky dropped down behind a log, propped her heavy long-barreled rifle on it, steadying it with the thick moss pad she carried for that purpose, took careful aim and fired. The result of her shot was such that her heart almost leaped out of her mouth. With a wild yell a dozen redskins jumped up from among the bushes, their turkey feather headdresses tossing in the air. Almost instantly one Indian fell, his heart pierced by a shot from the boat.



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More shots cracked from the boat and took deadly effect. Becky's mind worked as fast as her fingers, which were rapidly reloading her rifle. She grasped the full seriousness of her predicament. She had stumbled upon an ambush. Whoever the white men in the big boat were, the Indians had received word of their coming and had been lying in wait to kill them. But for the fact that Becky Landers was looking for a Christmas turkey, and had fired at a bunch of tail feathers, the white men would have been shot down as they landed. She could guess what was taking place in the minds of the savages. They believed that they in turn had been ambushed. The shot from behind meant to them not that Becky Landers was trying for a turkey but that armed white men were screened in the woods. Becky knew that her only hope of escape was to intensify that impression. She must keep on firing as fast as she could reload, to discourage the Indians from rushing into her bit of forest. She knew that when Indians discovered they were in a trap, they seldom stayed to fight; they usually broke through and made off.

Bang! her second shot rhymed with a volley from the boat. The savages caught up their wounded and dashed westward along the bank. Far down the river a large canoe slid out from the opposite shore to meet them. Becky lay still, peering over the log's edge, and watched their flight.

"Hullo-oo, there!" A white man, followed by several others, came up over the edge of the bank. He called





With a wild yell a dozen redskins jumped up



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again, "Hullo, there! Come on out, you fellows, and let's shake hands with you."

"Hullo!" Becky's clear light tones floated back to him and gave him such a shock that he almost dropped his rifle; and the sight of Becky running towards him fleetly from the woods did nothing to reassure him.

"A girl!" he shouted. "A girl, by thunder!"

"Three cheers for the girl!" another man cried. The men, including their leader, gave the cheers lustily. They laughed in mischievous delight as they saw her cheeks grow crimson.

"Why, it's Becky Landers!"

Becky looked quickly at the speaker. Gradually, through the haze of her embarrassment, she recognized him, and then the man next to him. They were Bill Canty and Jeff Smoke, two ruffians who had been driven out of Maybrook more than a year before. A sense of real fear, which the Indians had not inspired, came over her. Who were these nine men? And why had they come? She looked again, anxiously, at their leader and took some comfort from his handsome manly face and the blue eyes which beamed on her with frank admiration and kindness. Still, she had to know; and, according to her habit, she went straight to the point.

"Are you a highwayman too?" she asked, looking him bravely in the eyes.

"Sort of," he answered, his white teeth showing in a flashing smile.

"Because if you are," she went on steadily, though



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she felt her knees beginning to shake, "I haven't anything but my rifle. And we need that so terribly. You see, I have to take care of Mother and the children."

"That's right," Jeff Smoke put in. "She's the man o' the family. Her Paw's killed an' Injuns run off with her brother."

The leader put out his hand and grasped hers.

"Becky Landers," he said, "you're a first-class fighting man and we're proud to know you. Maybe you've heard of me. My name's Clark."

"Not George Rogers Clark!" she gasped, her bright brown eyes getting rounder and larger.

"That's me, Becky," he laughed.

"But you said you were a highwayman!"

"Well, that's the mildest name they're calling me back in Virginia right now," he answered. "You see, I've got a boatload of powder down below. The Virginia Assembly wouldn't vote it to me because they said they couldn't afford it. So I told them, if they didn't, I'd raise three or four hundred men out here and take Kentucky for myself——"

"We could do it, too, b'gosh!" Bill Canty exclaimed.

"'For,' said I, 'gentlemen, if you think Kentucky is not worth defending you can't think it worth holding, so it'll be no loss to you.' They were afraid I meant it! So they gave me the powder. But the Governor said I was no better than 'a highwayman.' Now you see why I answered 'sort of' when you asked me."

"I see," Becky answered, dimpling.



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"And, Becky Landers, if the Indians had killed me and my friends here, and had captured the powder, it's likely the British would have taken Kentucky. That powder's going along in our powder horns, Becky, to Kaskaskia and Vincennes. When you shot at those savages, Becky Landers, maybe you fired the shot that'll save Kentucky."

"I didn't fire at savages," Becky said. She was far too truthful to accept praise she felt was not deserved. "I only saw their tails—I mean—I thought they were turkeys. And I had promised the babies a Christmas turkey."

She colored hotly again as a roar of mirth went round.

"Jeff," said Clark, as soon as he could speak, "run down to the boat and fetch the two turkeys I shot this morning."

"Right enough," Jeff agreed, and jumped over the bank.

When he returned, Clark took the turkeys, and slung them over his shoulder.

"You boys can eat deer," he said. "And you'd better fall to as soon as you've pitched camp. I'll sleep at Kenton's tonight. But first I'm going home with Becky Landers and her Christmas turkeys. I want to tell Mrs. Landers what a great soldier her daughter is. You needn't blush, Becky Landers. Even if you did shoot just because you thought they were turkeys, you kept on after you knew they were Indians. It took brains to know that was the best thing to do, and it took courage to do it. When we eat dinner in Kaskaskia, boys, we'll



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drink the first toast to Becky Landers, the lass that saved our powder."

"You bet we will!" they shouted.

Becky's heart was thumping as she turned back through the woods, where the blue shadows of dusk were beginning to fall, with George Rogers Clark at her side. The trail they traveled was the one she had made earlier in the day on her hunt for the Christmas turkey and now it led them back to the Landers' cabin inside the walls of the Maybrook fort. But, to Becky Landers, every softly crunching print of her small moccasined foot beside his on that dry leafy trail homeward seemed to mark another step forward on the road to Kaskaskia and Rodney.



Buffalo and Injuns

by Armstrong Sperry

BUFFALO! Buffalo!"

Scouts rode into camp on the wings of the magic cry. Instantly the little valley of Walnut Creek resounded with shouts and leaped to life and swift activity. The wagon train was plunged into pandemonium. Men sprang from their robes standing, reached automatically for their rifles, threw saddles on their horses. Here was a long-awaited meat at hand. Buffalo! To the older hunters it meant only a renewal of a thrilling sport and the satisfaction of an appetite. But for the greenhorn it was a dream come true.

Hawk Eye knew the word, or perhaps had sensed the presence of the buffalo long since, for she was chafing at the picket rope, trembling with eagerness to be up and off. I flung the saddle across her back, cinched it tight, and grabbed Old Chief Thrower.

Sandy howled with wolfish delight. "Buffler, boys!"



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he crowed, dancing a fancy caper. "We'll be havin' hump fer supper, else why was buffler made, I'm askin'?"

Pierre, stripped to the waist, swept up at a gallop, a wild figure and as dark as any Indian. He hadn't even paused to saddle Black Knight, but had flung a buffalo hide across the animal's back and cinched it with a band of rawhide, guiding his mount by a jaw rope. He pulled up and threw out an arm toward the end of the valley.

"They're around that elbow!" he shouted. "They'll run up wind and go out by that pass yonder, so look to your priming." His eyes met mine for a minute. "Is Old Chief Thrower ready?" he grinned. "When the rifles begin to pop, then down and into 'em, son, and let's see if you can tell fat cow from pore bull!"

Every man was mounted by now. With weapons a-flourish and yipping at the top of our lungs we went over and across, out through the little valley, charging to harry the buffalo herd.

We topped a rise of land and every nerve leaped in response to the sight. The green floor of the plain was suddenly wiped out by a carpet of brown—a moving carpet of dark bodies. It stretched to the horizon, stunning the eye. Buffalo—thousands, tens of thousands, legions of them. It was a sight to thrill the stoutest heart. For the greenhorn it was touched with terror as well. The herd seemed nervous and restless, shaggy heads lifting, short-visioned eyes trying to pierce the haze of distance. Clouds of dust rose where bulls locked horns in combat. A dull, rumbling bellow struck my ears: the



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earth thunder of the buffalo horde. Trails cut deep into the soil, crisscrossing in every direction. Wallows pitted the plain in wide circles of white alkali. All my life I had imagined this scene, pictured it, relived it in countless tales of trapper and hunter. Now here I was, riding down into it on my pony with Old Chief Thrower gripped in my cold hands. "Run your buffalo!" my father had said, and how I wished he might have been here to run them with me. Blackbirds were flying about, devouring the flies that were the inseparable companions of the animals.

I saw Pierre and Zenas sweep past in a wide circuit to stalk the buffalo from down wind, and I watched them eagerly as they took full advantage of every hollow, emerging, disappearing again.

Sandy, riding a high, clay-colored mare, shouted above the noise: "They's been redskins worryin' that herd. It's nervous as a settlement squaw. Injuns been after 'em, and not so long ago, nuther."

A vague uneasiness seemed to be running through the herd. The animals were pawing, rumbling, lifting their ponderous bosses, horns flashing in the bright sun. Their shortsighted eyes told them nothing, but their uplifted nostrils sorted the air currents and caught the warning that flashed along the nerves of heredity.

"Dang the wind!" cursed Sandy, "she's shiftin'. See you shoot center, cub, or thar be no meat in pot tonight."

Men were riding everywhere. Then came two sharp rifle reports. Leroux's maybe, and Kent's. Like a flash



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the herd swung as a unit. One second they were grazing. The next, pounding in full flight.

"Ow-owgh!" sounded the shrill battle cry. "Down and into 'em, boys!"

Every man with brandishing gun and wild-pitched yell poured over the rise and down. The herd fled, torrential, mighty, out toward the opening in the valley's end. Bosses low, tails straight, headlong in flight. Calves leaped and blatted. Bulls bellowed. Men were shouting with victory. Their rifles barked and puffs of smoke mingled with the choking dust. The herd was rocketing at top speed up the draw.

I swung my quirt across Hawk Eye's rump. She stretched out her neck and fairly flew over the rough ground. The air was thick with clouds of dust, blinding, strangling, and within that dense wall buffalo unnumbered fled in wild escape and I was riding into them. Another second and I was in the center of the mass. A terrible din assailed my ears. The air reeled and trembled with noise. The ground shook beneath me. The roar of the bulls, the lowing of the cows, the thunder of a million hoofs. . . . An instant of panic stabbed at me. Suppose Hawk Eye should stumble in a dog hole? I'd be ground into the plain, pulverized to a powder. The very earth was rocking. It was a world gone mad. Buffalo in front, behind, on both sides of me now. As far as I could see, only heaving bodies, tossing horns.

The ground was bad at best and growing worse; abrupt rises and sudden hollows, unsuspected gullies that



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could spell annihilation. Wheeling, shoving, shouldering, the herd raced in a flight that was deceptively clumsy but incredibly swift. The green horses showed signs of arrant terror at being urged into that heaving mass of flesh. I thanked old Lanky Lewis from the bottom of my heart for the horse between my knees. Hawk Eye was in her element, no doubt about that.

Almost as if a signal had been given, the herd seemed to break into half a dozen groups, scampering off in as many different directions. Some hunters followed one group, some another. I lost sight of my companions in the general confusion and they were soon blotted out by the clouds of dust. Glancing about me, I saw that they had all disappeared from my range of vision and I was alone within the plunging herd.

Now I began to collect myself, trying to distinguish cows from bulls. I picked out a fat cow and urged Hawk Eye abreast of her—lifted Old Chief Thrower and took flying aim. Before I could press the trigger, the cow was suddenly plunging head over heels out of sight. Then next moment the ground seemed to have dropped from beneath me, and I knew a terrible sensation of falling. . . . Buffalo all around me, pitching into this deep, unseen gully where we had unwittingly been swept. Impossible to stop. . . . Down, down, ten feet, fifteen, maybe. . . . Sliding, plunging, Hawk Eye and I were hurled into it as were the buffalo themselves by the pressure behind. We brought up sharply at the bottom. Hawk Eye went down on her knees there in that chaos.



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I was thrown forward almost over her neck and hooked one knee wildly over the saddle horn to save myself from being pitched headlong. Quick as a flash, the pony was scrambling to her feet and up the opposite bank. It was so steep it seemed that she must fall backward and crush me with her weight and leave my body to the pulverizing hoofs of the herd. For a split-second her forefeet clung to the rim, while my heart caught in my throat. Then she was up and over and on—on once more with the rumbling horde.

Buffalo now on all sides of me; ugly-looking, shaggy-maned, matted shreds of hair flying down wind behind them. They were panting heavily, their backs streaked with sweat, tongues lolling loosely from their mouths. From somewhere beyond the enveloping clouds of dust, the shrill cries of the hunters rose above the drumming of the hoofs. At top speed we fled. A large bull on my right turned to gore me, but Hawk Eye was too quick for him. She leaped sideways with a speed that almost unseated me, and on we raced.

There was a fat cow just ahead. . . . I urged Hawk Eye up to her side, pulled abreast. The cow sprang at my pony with lowered horns, but once more the little mare dodged the lunge and I fought to hold my saddle. The cow had disappeared. On we thundered, mile after mile, Hawk Eye holding her top speed and showing no signs of weakening.

I picked out another animal and fired again—saw where the bullet entered. A good shot, not too high.



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Then in trying to reload, I lost sight of my quarry. But I was certain that she was mortally wounded.

I slackened pace gradually, letting the herd sweep past me, and looking for my wounded cow to drop out. On, on they rocketed, leaving me and my pony behind in clouds of dust and sand. A short distance ahead I could make out a solitary buffalo galloping heavily. A cow—wounded. I spurred my pony to her side. The buffalo turned her head, mane bristling, little eyes red with rage. Before I could draw bead, she swung and rushed me. Once again the Comanche pony dodged neatly. Had my mare been anything less than expert, surely I would have been killed, for I seemed to have conducted my first buffalo hunt clumsily indeed.

Now my victim was weakening—bleeding at the mouth. Taking careful sight, I fired once again. The cow sank to her knees, rolled over. Lay still. I leaped to the ground and ran forward. Then, for the first time, I noticed that there was an arrow, deeply driven, embedded in her haunch. Someone else had shot at this buffalo. . . . *An Indian!* I straightened up suddenly and looked about me. The main body of the herd had vanished from sight. Only a few old bulls were grazing by themselves.

The realization that I was lost swept over me with stunning impact. I was alone with my slain buffalo in the middle of a deserted plain. I had no idea how many miles I had come, or whether I was west, east, south, or north of my starting point. All sense of direction seemed



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to have left me in the excitement of the chase and its devious twists. A hush, incredibly intensified after the noise of battle, had fallen over the land. Hawk Eye, exhausted from the grilling pace to which I had subjected her, stood with drooping head and heaving sides. Given time, she would doubtless have carried me back to camp. But now she was played out, winded. The undulating swells of the plain on every hand offered no familiar landmark for a guide. To my left was a low ledge of yellow sandstone, flat as a wall; nothing else as far as my eye could see except sandhills and scrubby buffalo grass.

I knew a second of panic, then caught hold of myself. I had my horse and my rifle, and here was meat. I set about butchering the animal, clumsily cutting off a slab above the hump. And whether I was more upset by my predicament or by the stupidity which had led me into it, it would be hard to say. The shadows lengthened as the sun dropped, and I tried to figure on what angle the Arkansas would be running, and in which direction I should strike out. But I would have to give Hawk Eye time to get her wind. Perhaps if I waited till after dark, I'd see the camp fires of the wagon train, wherever they might be.

Suddenly I was listening intently. Hawk Eye pricked up her ears. From somewhere beyond the rise I heard hoofbeats on the hard sand. Indians? I swallowed hard as I loaded Old Chief Thrower, trying not to see how my hand shook. Then I set my back to Hawk Eye and



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stood with the butchered cow at my feet. Before I could stop her, the Comanche pony had lifted her head and neighed sharply. With sudden rage, I struck her across the muzzle.

"You fool!" I cried, "do you want every Indian in the plains down on us?"

I might have known. . . . The figure that rode over the top of the rise was Pierre Leroux. He halted for a second, looking down at me with a faint smile playing on his lips, taking in at a glance my plight, my winded horse, the badly butchered cow.

"I'm not lost!" I threw out quickly, before he could speak.

"No," he answered solemnly as he rode down the slope. "I know you're not lost, son. Just thought I'd drop around to help you pack some of your cow back to camp."

He slid to the ground and his eye was arrested by sight of the arrow still embedded in the cow's flank. He was all serious in an instant and dropped to his knees to examine the feathered shaft. I had forgotten this, too, in my plight. Every Indian tribe makes its arrows differently, and it's by such "sign" that the experienced Mountain Man is able to keep some check on his enemies. An arrow found in the carcass of animal or man is a message to be read by the knowing eye. Pierre butchered out the embedded arrowhead—scrutinized it closely. I saw that it was wrapped with elk sinew.

"Just as I thought," he muttered. "Pawnee . . . planted



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this morning, or I can't read sign. I thought that herd was powerful uneasy. Always means Injuns have been at 'em."

"But we haven't seen hide nor track of Injuns," I offered, not feeling too proud of my showing to date.

"True enough," he returned, "but if they haven't seen us, then I've never lifted ha'r, my lad! They've probably decided we'd be richer picking than the buffalo. An Injun's always after ha'r or horses, and buffalo can wait." He straightened up and looked around.

"Then you think——?"

"I've a notion you may be seeing Injuns any time now, Starbuck, my lad!"

Something in his tone made my breath catch and I swung about. There, on top of the low table-land to the west, outlined against the sky, was a figure on horse-back. The wind stirred the feathers of a headdress. *Indians!* A moment before, nothing but unbroken expanse of ridge line.

I looked at my companion.

"Pierre—do you see?"

The scout nodded grimly. "Saw him a full thirty seconds ago. Where's your eyes, son?"

Another figure had joined the motionless horseman on the ridge, then a third. . . . I felt my heart thump, but my hands were steady. I had wondered how I would face the first real scare. Now here it was, and it wasn't so bad. In the mounting tension Old Chief Thrower seemed suddenly friendly and close and warm to the hand. With



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thumb upon gun cock and eyes straining, I waited for Pierre to call the turn.

"I reckon those boys are the answer to the arrow in your cow," he cried. "They've come to collect it, maybe. They'll collect more than that, as sure as my rifle shoots center!"

Still the three Indians sat their ponies, sharply outlined against the sky, motionless, the sun glistening on their painted bodies and flashing points of light from their lanceheads.

"That horse of yours is about done in," Pierre muttered. "We'd better make tracks for that rock pile yonder and fight it out if we have to. They're probably only Pawnee scouts for some larger party. Maybe we won't have to fight."

The words had scarce left his lips when the three horsemen leaped to sudden life and action. Down the slope they poured, feathers flying, bodies bent, lashing at their ponies and yelling as they came.

Pierre leaped to Black Knight's back. "It's cache or lose ha'r, lad!" he shouted. "To that pile of rock, and hang on to your rifle for hoss and beaver!"

I sprang into saddle and together we raced for the precarious protection of that ledge of sandstone. Behind us came the high yells of the Indians in pursuit. We gained the rock and leaped to the ground.

"I'll hold 'em off while you hobble the animals," Pierre sang out. "Throw a hobble around their forelegs and look to your priming. We're not gone beaver yet!"



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I stooped swiftly to obey, took a turn with the rawhide rope about the forelegs of the two horses—hobbled them tightly together. The Indians, screeching like demons, split and rode to right and left while they were still some two hundred yards from us. My hands trembled now with excitement as I raised Old Chief Thrower.

From the corner of his eye Pierre saw my nervousness and his voice rapped out: "Take it easy, son! Here's your first lesson in Indian fighting. Don't go firing your piece first crack out of the box. Remember you've only got one shot, and an empty gun's no use. You'll never have a chance to reload! Wait till you hear my gun. I've got two shots, remember. There's only three Injuns. So we've an even chance."

The Indians had swung their ponies in a wide circle and now they were dashing back toward us again, arrows whipped to the strings. With wild, high-pitched "Whoo-oo!" on they came, screeching like to split our eardrums. They had no stomach for facing loaded rifles at close range. They spent their energies in shout and action, in long-range insult and chance arrow. But each time as they wheeled and rode in swiftly toward us, they came a little closer.

Our horses were plunging and pulling at their hobbles, frightened with the din and clamor. But the hobbles held. Pierre threw a sharp word of command at the stallion and it quieted, stood taut and trembling. Pierre remained at ease, lean jaw tight-shut and out-thrust,



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watching the advance. This time the wild riders moved within range of rifle shot. Pierre whipped his two-shoot to position. I did the same.

Of single impulse the three Indians disappeared to the opposite side of their horses. It was astounding, the speed with which they accomplished the feat. Only the tip of a moccasin showing below their ponies' belly for a target! Closer in they came. Old Chief Thrower trembled in my hands. No use to pretend I wasn't scared. I was.

"Hold your fire!" Pierre warned.

"But——"

"Do as I tell you!" he flashed.

Back and forth the savages swung, closer—closer. . . . The manes and tails of their ponies, braided with bright cloth, streamed on the wind of their passage. In mounting excitement I found myself admiring the superb horsemanship of these savages; caught my breath when I saw them draw an arrow to the head in threat—then withhold it.

Suddenly one Indian, bolder than the others, wheeled like a flash of light and thundered in straight toward me. I saw the glint of his teeth and the white of his eyes. Should I fire? Uncertainty swept me. Should I His arrow was drawn to the head.

"Hold your fire!" came Pierre's shout.

I braced my feet, willed myself to stillness as the front sight of Old Chief Thrower came into line with that ferocious face. A whining *pinnnnng!* The warrior had



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released his arrow. The shaft splintered against my rifle stock—stung my face with the fragments. At that second Pierre's rifle roared almost in my ear. The Indian's pony reared, pawed the air, then sprawled at our feet, the red rider rolling in the dust. The horse pulled itself up and scampered over the plain, but the Indian lay where he had fallen, paunch-shot, still.

"Ow-owgh! Ow-owgh!" Pierre's high-pitched battle cry rang out above the tumult. As he wheeled to face the charge of the two remaining horsemen, he was all Mountain Man—savage fighting savage, eyes flashing, teeth bared.

Evidently these Indians didn't know the two-shoot gun and thought we'd be easy picking with only one shot left between us. In they raced. I saw their faces wild with heat of battle and lust for blood. Almost upon us. Now! Old Chief Thrower barked. There came a choked-off cry. A rearing horse. A second Indian pitched backward, writhing in the sand. . . . The third savage wheeled his horse with a motion of the knee—fitted an arrow to the string with deadly intent. Then it was that Pierre fired his second shot. It was his deadly joke.

We saw the Indian stagger, then rally. He dashed in toward his fallen brother. Before we had time to reload, he had swung the wounded man up to his pony's rump. Another second and the two savages were disappearing over the ridge. Only one figure, mute and still, remained to tell of this swift battle.



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An arrow had ripped across Pierre's cheek, laying open the flesh to the bone. He dashed the blood from his eyes and bellowed forth his battle cry once again: "*Og-owgh! Ow-Oowgh!*" Blood called for blood in the trapper's primitive creed. He was transformed in an instant into a man I had never seen; a lean animal, lion-strong, charged with a lust for revenge. He sprang toward the dead Indian, whipped knife from belt, hooked his fingers into the scalp lock. I caught the flash of steel as it worked and knew a sick feeling in my stomach's pit. Then he was wiping the blade across his thigh, and flung the reeking scalp back upon the body with contempt. I saw him break the bow and snap the arrows one by one, and hurl the pieces upon his enemy.

"Starve on the Ghost Trail!" he spat out. "Hyar's wolf meat, and proper kind!"

I looked on, finding no words.

Strange it was to see a man swept at an instant's turn from civilization to savagery. But I knew that except for the grace of God and Pierre Leroux, that scalp might have been my own, dangling tonight from some Pawnee scalp pole.

"Guess we'll leave your buffalo for the wolves, too, Starbuck," the man said presently, quieter by now. "There'll be meat a-plenty in camp tonight, I reckon. But if we don't make tracks, it'll all be gone, if I'm any judge of sign."

Dark was closing in. I unhobbled the horses and we climbed into saddle. As we topped the sandhills, I looked



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back at the scene of our late battle. Dark forms were closing in. Wolves. . . . I shivered.

We rode on in silence, Pierre lost in his own thoughts. Was he, I wondered, pondering the strangeness of his life and nature? I wanted to ask how many miles I had come in pursuit of my buffalo, but I was not very proud of this day's showing and I held my peace.

The first star was blinking low overhead and the sky above the dark horizon was luminous with promise of an early moon. A faint breeze had sprung up and stirred the damp hair on my forehead. At last, crossing a ridge of sandstone, I saw the distant fires of the caravan and heard the far-off shouts of hungry men gorging themselves after the hunt.

"Fools!" Pierre muttered under his breath. "I'll stake my hair the train's wide open to attack! If there's any more Pawnees where those three came from, they'll be around before morning."

His face was grim as we rode into camp, but nothing could dampen the ardor of the wagoners still flushed with the heat of their victorious hunt. Fires flared high. There were countless willing hands to prepare the feast. Hump roast and tenderloin sizzled on the spits. Fleishy ribs baked amid the coals. Intestines, turned inside-out, writhed like snakes on long sticks, while skillets bubbled with marrow and melting fat. Men were cracking marrowbones, guzzling the marrow—"trapper butter" as it was called, yellow and raw and packed with sustenance.

"Hyar's doin's, boys! Let's chaw!" shouted Sandy, dancing with delight. "I'm fair wolfish!" and he buried



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his teeth into a strip of tenderloin, half cooked, and the blood ran into his beard and dripped off his chin.

Appetites that couldn't wait the slow processes of cooking; men gorged on food half done. Zenas was stuffing down a yard of undercooked *boudins*; other men were dipping warmed liver into gall and relishing it with loud-smacking lips; others pulled half-raw flesh from simmering skillets and cursed the heat that burned their gullets even as they gorged. Faces thick with grease glistened in the firelight. Buckskins and hands reeked of it. The plainsman's orgy—the moment to which he looked forward with keenest anticipation; making him forget for the moment the privations and dangers of his violent life.

I slid wearily out of saddle and joined the feast. The smell of sizzling meat brought me sudden realization of my own hunger. Pierre shoved a pan of marrow and drippings toward me. "Mug on to this, lad!" he cried. "It'll put meat on your ribs, and make you shed water like a beaver!"

As the sharp edge of appetite dulled, the cries and grunts of the voracious men changed imperceptibly to sighs of repletion. They patted their paunches with deep satisfaction; unrolled their buffalo robes, and lay down to sleep for a while. Later they would awake and gorge themselves anew.

And out beyond the circle of the fires, piles of bones glistened in the light and wolves sat waiting in the outer darkness, their eyes like green, unblinking signals in the night.



River Dragon

by Carl Lane

SLOWLY GRAY MOUNTAIN, tall on his beautiful pony, came through the streets of the small village. The river flowed brown and serene beyond, the new maize grew sweet and lush in the garden and the bright bronze sun smiled down on the meeting of Gray Mountain and his people. He raised his hand in greeting to his warriors assembled about the council fire. Then he hugged Yellow Flower and touched Eagle Feather on the shoulder in a man's greeting.

"I am glad to have returned, my son."

"I am proud to welcome you, Father."

Eagle Feather could see the gritty dust of many days' riding thick on the ponies' flanks. Two large filled saddle-bags hung across the pack horse. Eagerly Eagle Feather studied them, wondering if his father had remembered to bring him the hatchet which he had so much wanted.



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But he noticed suddenly that his father did not smile as always. The Chief's face was set and grim, he looked worried and troubled.

Of course, Yellow Flower did not notice. She squealed with joy and clung to Gray Mountain. "My father," she coaxed, "my brave, beautiful father, I have missed you so." And then, suddenly forgetting her politeness, she buried her face in Gray Mountain's shoulder and cried, "My father, what gift did you bring me?"

But Gray Mountain did not smile. He turned gravely to his daughter and shook his head. "Gifts, my daughter," he said sadly, "must wait—for I bring dreadful news to the family of the Cheyenne."

He faced his people who crowded about him as he spoke.

"What is this terrible news, Gray Mountain?"

"Are the Pawnees truly coming?"

The Chief spoke slowly and carefully.

"As I rode from the southeast, along the River of Mud," he told them solemnly, "I spied a great ugly beast like a serpent, waddling up the stream. It was a huge monster, of brilliant plumage, with a many-colored tail and head, moving swiftly and churning our peaceful river to an angry foam."

"Such a beast could not be," said one of the braves. "We have never seen anything like that. Yet our chief cannot lie."

"My eyes have seen it," said Gray Mountain, "my ears have heard it. It is an evil thing. It is a dragon."



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"It is the King of the Bison," pronounced See-at-Night in awe. "It must be so—our legends so name one."

"No, it is not a bison," Gray Mountain replied, "no man has ever seen such a beast. Our legends do not foretell this creature."

"Perhaps it is the Great Spirit in the clothing of a beast, come to protect us from the Pawnees," See-at-Night suggested. "I read strange things in the winter skies many moons ago and this may be their truths revealed to us. Or it is perhaps the Meteor of the North, which will burn our land and boil away our river."

"I am sure not," Gray Mountain said; "from the red nostrils of this creature hisses the white breath of frost, its spiked horns belch black smoke and angry flame and sometimes the beast bellows with the voice of canyon thunder. Its lashing tail tears away the riverbanks. Even the mighty buffalo and the brave puma slink away before it. I came with all speed to warn my people. We must flee away from the river, retreat into the safety of the hills. I command you, O my troubled people, to break camp at once—to escape while there is yet time from this horrible beast which walks upon the water and comes to devour us."

"But there are Pawnees on the warpath, Great Chief," reminded Two Sticks, the leader of the warriors.

"The Pawnees we can understand," Gray Mountain said, "we know not the powers of this terrible creature on the river. Give the word to break camp, I bid you."

And Gray Mountain and his warriors gathered close



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about the fire for a hurried whispered council while the women and girls scattered to the tepees and prepared for the flight from the river.

Chief Gray Mountain had sent Eagle Feather and White Hawk to a thickly wooded point of land extending into the river some distance below a high bluff which overlooked the Missouri not far from where the boys had been fishing a few hours before. The warriors lay concealed in the grove on this bluff, their war arrows ready, their lance tips hardened in fire and sharpened with sandstone.

White Hawk and Eagle Feather lay hidden near the marshy shore at the end of the point. Eagle Feather was the scout for the war party. White Hawk was the messenger. The moment that the water creature was spied on the river which wound to the south, White Hawk was to carry the news to the warriors. See-at-Night, who knew the signals, was to make smoke at once to recall the braves who had gone with the caravan.

It was now well after noon. The sun was hot even under the shade of the cottonwood, ash and chestnut trees which formed their leafy hiding place. Eagle Feather would have dearly loved to take a swim in the cool river but dared not. Nobody knew how swiftly the beast could move, or what dreadful savagery it could perform, and the river had suddenly become an evil, dangerous place.

"Let us watch closely," White Hawk suggested. "It



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would be a great honor for us to discover the water beast first."

"I am watching," Eagle Feather replied. "I imagine I see all sorts of strange moving things far down the river."

Insects droned busily about them, feeding catfish splashed in the deep pools beside the marsh and a curious rabbit wagged his ears at the boys from a weed-grown stump where Eagle Feather remembered he had once cut hardwood gopher-trap saplings. But the two boys remained alert.

After a long wait Eagle Feather saw something move far down the twisting brown river. It looked like a black cloud, drifting above the bluffs. But it was a very great distance away. He touched White Hawk's arm.

"See that. It may be a dust cloud only."

"Or smoke, Eagle Feather."

"There are no camps down that way."

"Pawnees," suggested White Hawk.

"They would not be announcing their coming by camp-fires, I am sure," Eagle Feather said. "But—wait! Did not my father say that this water beast breathes fire, that it has horns which belch smoke?"

"He did," White Hawk cried. "That—that may be IT."

They watched tensely. The smoke cloud was coming toward them very slowly, shifting across the prairie horizon as the river turned east and west. Eagle Feather trembled with excitement. He was not afraid. There



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would be ample time to retreat before the thing came too near.

"I am sure now that it is the beast, White Hawk. Look—the buzzards are wheeling over the prairie where they have been disturbed."

Now he could see parts of the creature's body beneath the smoke cloud. He caught glimpses of the white water cascaded by the thing's lashing tail. It was approaching swiftly.

"White Hawk," he cried, "run to the bluff and tell the Chief that the beast is coming—that it is already in the great bend of the Bay of Bronze, where we have hunted ducks. I will stay—when I am certain of what it intends, I will follow."

White Hawk nodded and crept stealthily from the hiding place so as not to be seen by the beast. When he was back from the river, in tall grass, he ran along the path toward where the warriors waited.

Below Eagle Feather there was a long straight sweep of river. Intently he watched the great beast crawl up the Missouri. He could now see the sinuous shape of the dragon. Its head was reared before it, the cruel mouth bristling with white fangs. Steam, like that made by cooking water, spouted from its nostrils. The snakelike body was covered with rainbow-colored scales and along the sleek back were spiny fins, like those of a catfish. From a tall horn behind the shoulders, heavy smoke billowed and tumbled downriver before the north wind. Near the middle of the body were short legs with web-



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bed feet. Eagle Feather could see them kick in the water as the creature swam slowly against the current of the deep middle channel.

It was like no animal that Eagle Feather had ever seen. Even See-at-Night, who knew of strange things which lived where the gods lived, had never described such a creature. But of one thing Eagle Feather was certain—this invader was an enemy and meant no good to the Cheyenne.

The creature was almost abreast of his hiding place now. Eagle Feather could hear the thing pant, could hear the rush of its fiery breath. Suddenly, the beast bellowed—a deep-throated growling roar of anger. The river cliffs echoed and re-echoed to the cry, the prairie birds flew into the sky in alarm . . . and then to his horror the beast suddenly turned toward his hiding place and came directly at him! The dripping mouth was open, the green slanted eyes were wicked and purposeful.

Eagle Feather wriggled backward through the grass in alarm. Had he remained too long? He forgot everything except to get away from the bank and warn the camp of this new move of the beast. He crouched low, crawling swiftly. Once beyond the grove he stood up and ran as fast as he could.

His moccasined feet found the familiar trail. On it were the tracks of White Hawk, wide spaced, in the dust. He did not look back but he could hear the beast now, close against the shore, snorting and growling



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among the shore reeds of the very grove in which he had been hiding.

Running swiftly, Eagle Feather kept his eyes to the trail. White Hawk's footprints led him on. He hoped that his friend was far on his way to warn the war party. The great animal seemingly was about to leave the river and come on land, and his father and the warriors would have to attack it where it now grazed on the shore instead of from the heights of the bluff.

But suddenly Eagle Feather stopped dead in the trail, hardly believing what his eyes showed him. In the dust at his feet were not only the small footprints of White Hawk but also those of many other feet! They were large, man-sized tracks, and Eagle Feather knew them instantly.

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He threw himself into the tall grass at once. Those moccasined footprints, the scattered dust of the trail, told a story that could mean only one thing. White Hawk was being followed by the Pawnee raiding party of which the smoke had warned. His best friend, White Hawk, was in danger.

And then a new thought suddenly came to Eagle Feather. Perhaps White Hawk had been captured. Perhaps he had not been able to deliver the message about the water beast! Eagle Feather lay on the prairie, his heart pounding. Desperately he tried to arrange his thoughts, to think out this new turn of events.

"I must try to get to my father's war camp myself,"



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he told himself. "He must be told that the beast is coming on shore and will have to be attacked on land."

But it was impossible for Eagle Feather to follow the trail which White Hawk had taken. The Pawnees were between him and the Cheyenne warriors. He would surely be seen and captured. Slowly, he realized that there was only one course left open to him. He must creep back to the grove where he had been watching, somehow steal past the terrible beast and then try to follow the treacherous shore line under the river bluffs. It was a dangerous and desperate undertaking. But Eagle Feather knew that he must try. There was no other way.

"I must. I must," Eagle Feather told himself and made his hands into small tight fists. "The Pawnees may discover my father's party waiting on the bluff for an enemy from the river and attack them from behind."

Carefully he wriggled through the prairie grass toward the river. He scarcely dared to breathe. He must not alarm the prairie birds and so reveal his position. After a long time, with the late afternoon sun hot on his back and the dry dust thick in his mouth, he reached the grove again. He could not see the river serpent. But he heard the thing chewing in the marshes, a curious sharp snapping that sounded somewhat like a woodchopper cutting firewood.

Slowly and cautiously he crept nearer the base of the sandy bluff on the river above the grove. There was no path along the river, only a dangerous shore of quicksand and treacherous marshes. But he would have to



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make the attempt. Lives and honor depended upon him. Soon he could rise to a crouched walk, then make a swift dash for the screen of the great bronze sandy cliffs. Success was almost at hand and he felt suddenly proud. But, as See-at-Night had so often said when he talked wisdom to the Cheyenne boys, "a wise man does not count his buffalo until they are killed." Eagle Feather had cause to recall those words for he was suddenly aware that someone—or *something*—moved near him.

He could see nothing from the grass. He crawled faster, trying to be silent. But suddenly something whizzed in the air above him, something long and snake-like. It settled over his head and drew tight around his shoulders, pinning his arms to his body. Eagle Feather fought the thing, rolling on his back and kicking like a wildcat, but it drew tighter and tighter and finally he could not move and he knew that he was bound by a long rope that reached away into the trees. And at the end of the rope, holding it tightly—was a man!

The man looked like an Indian. He had on leather stockings and his waist was bare and his black hair braided like a warrior's. But he was like no Indian that Eagle Feather had ever seen before for this man was—WHITE.

"We Hoa! We Hoa!" Eagle Feather cried in real alarm and struggled against the rope. "Let me go!"

The man grinned. In his belt was a woodchopper's hatchet and against a hickory tree rested a long stick of iron which Eagle Feather instinctively knew was the



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fearsome gun which his father had once described to him.

"Peace, little brother," the man said in good Kiowa talk which was enough like the Cheyenne tongue so that Eagle Feather could understand. "No harm is meant to you if you are a friend."

"I am not a friend of the We Hoa," Eagle Feather cried stoutly. "Unbind me! Let me go!"

"Are you a Cheyenne, little man?" the We Hoa asked kindly.

"Yes. I am a scout for my father, Gray Mountain."

"Gray Mountain is known to me, son of the Chief," the We Hoa said. "Indeed, I have come to talk and trade with him and all the river chiefs."

"You will neither talk nor trade," Eagle Feather cried; "there is a fearful beast in the grove behind us. He could eat us both in one bite. But I know a way to get away from him . . ."

The We Hoa suddenly roared in laughter. "The beast is mine," he grinned jovially. "I'm sure he won't hurt us."

Eagle Feather gazed on the man in amazement. "Did you come on him?" he asked cautiously. "Is it . . . is it . . . a pony?"

"Yes; something like a pony, Little Chief. It carries me and many more We Hoas," the white man answered. "My name is Many Tongues for I speak in the language of the red man and white man both. I am a brother of the Kiowas far to the south, to whom some of the



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Cheyenne became brothers many snows ago. It was there that I learned your language and heard talk of the great Chief, your father, and his vast wealth of horses and furs. I and my We Hoa friends and my pony wish to be brothers to you."

"What is the pony's name?" Eagle Feather asked.

"He is called Walk-in-the-Water," Many Tongues answered.

"Well," said Eagle Feather, "when he reaches the river beyond, my father and his warriors will kill him. See-at-Night has made medicine and told us so. If you are my brother you had best not be caught riding your pony. And if you are truly my brother, you will unbind me."

"Well spoken, son of Gray Mountain."

"My name is Eagle Feather."

Many Tongues did not at once unbind Eagle Feather. He took up his stick of iron. Then he chipped a piece of bark from a hickory tree with the shiny hatchet which Eagle Feather was already admiring and placed a slab against a stump almost forty paces away. He stood back and held the gun stick to his shoulder.

"I wish to show you, Eagle Feather," the We Hoa said, "that I do not need a rope to bind you. This stick of fire contains the magic of a rope. If it spits at one, that one is bound forever and will never move again. Watch."

Eagle Feather watched in fascination. Many Tongues sighted along the magic stick carefully, pointing it to-



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ward the bark slab. The stick suddenly spit red, a thunderous explosion filled the air and the slab jumped into the sky and fell to the ground and lay still. In amazement Eagle Feather saw that it was bashed and crushed by the magic power.

Many Tongues threw the rope from Eagle Feather's shoulders. For a fleeting moment, he had thought of running away as fast as he could. But the memory of the power of the gun was too dreadful. He stood in the glen, watching the We Hoa apprehensively. Many Tongues, for all his white skin and mysterious medicine powers, seemed to wish to be a friend. And that was curious.

"Now, Eagle Feather," Many Tongues said and began whittling a dry branch with his keen hatchet, "I do not wish to call upon the magic of my iron stick to kill any of my brothers. Nevertheless, I shall have to if you try to escape and tell your people where we are resting. Now tell me where your father and his warriors are ambushed along the river."

"No, no! Never!" cried Eagle Feather.

"You must believe, my brother, that we mean them no harm," Many Tongues said carefully. "Walk-in-the-Water is the friend of the Cheyenne. But if he is attacked or warred upon, he will fight back. I shall have to aim my magic stick at your people and they will be crushed and forever bound. They will be dead. Walk-in-the-Water does not wish me to do this unless I am forced to."

"Walk-in-the-Water may be only a pony but he is cruel and savage," Eagle Feather insisted stubbornly. "I



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have seen him belching fire. I have seen his red fangs and his swishing scorpion tail. I heard him gnashing his teeth as I crept by the woods."

Many Tongues laughed softly. "That noise was only the woodchoppers," he said. "You see, Walk-in-the-Water must stop every little while and be given great feedings of wood. My friends were merely cutting up branches for him."

"What are your friends' names?" asked Eagle Feather, becoming very much interested in the story of the strange water pony.

"They have many names—soldiers, boatmen, hunters, woodchoppers and guides like myself. Our chief is a great man whose We Hoa name is Stephen Long."

"What is your We Hoa name?" Eagle Feather wanted to know.

"My name is Ben Cutts."

"Ben Cutts," repeated Eagle Feather, "Ben Cutts." He liked the sound of the name as indeed he was beginning to like the white-skinned man. "That is a nice name but I shall call you Many Tongues. What is the We Hoa name of Walk-in-the-Water?"

"He is called a 'steamboat,' Eagle Feather," Many Tongues said seriously. "He has many brothers and sisters, all over the land, some very much greater even than Walk-in-the-Water. These steamboats live wherever there is water—in a river or a lake or a creek. The We Hoas have tamed them and made them into useful beasts of burden, as the Cheyenne have tamed the dog



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and the pony who drag their travois. Walk-in-the-Water comes up this river for the first time today. He means no harm, nor do his riders. We hope to discover if Walk-in-the-Water can make many swims to the Cheyenne land, for we wish to become acquainted with the Cheyenne and, in time, to trade with them."

"My mother and my sister and I would be glad if that occurred," Eagle Feather offered. "At present, our father must make the dangerous journey to the south to trade and we always worry until his return."

Eagle Feather was no longer afraid of the white man. He could understand that Many Tongues did not want him to escape. If his father was warned and attacked the curious animal which the We Hoas had tamed, Many Tongues and his friends would have to protect themselves with their magic sticks. Of course, nobody wanted that. He felt that he had made a friend of this brother from the south. Many, many years ago some of the Cheyenne families had gone to live in the land of the Kiowas along the Mississippi River but Eagle Feather knew from the legends that they still were friends of the northern Cheyenne people.

Therefore it was obvious that Many Tongues was also truly his own friend.

But in addition to this, he liked Many Tongues. The man smiled often. His voice was musical and gentle and his twinkling brown eyes were merry. He carried his marvelous magic stick, the gun, and his beautiful hatchet with modesty. He was neither boastful nor shy but



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talked with a simple directness that made Eagle Feather want to count him his friend and brother.

"Well," Many Tongues smiled, "you have been thinking it over, I see. What have you decided, Eagle Feather?"

"I wish to be your friend," Eagle Feather said and stood very straight before the We Hoa.

Many Tongues also stood up. Reaching out, he touched Eagle Feather on the shoulder and looked into his eyes.

"I am your friend and brother, son of the Chief," Many Tongues said solemnly.

"And I am your friend and brother also, O master of the water beast," Eagle Feather returned.

Then Many Tongues reached slowly to his belt and drew forth the shiny hatchet. With a sudden, quick motion, he cast it at a large hickory trunk near by. The beautiful weapon flashed in the red sunset and quivered in the wood, the keen edge buried deeply. "I make this gift to my new friend," the We Hoa said, "and with it I pledge my loyalty."

Eagle Feather knew he should be polite and make a speech. But he was too overcome with the generosity of the splendid gift. He ran to the tree and tore out the hatchet. Proudly he slipped it into his belt.

Then he stood with his arms folded, like his father. Never had he felt more like the son of a chief, never had he felt more like a true Cheyenne. But his real feeling of goodness came from the knowledge that he had gained a good and true friend.



The Attack

by Elizabeth Coatsworth

ABIGAIL, stopping at the window on her way to the pantry, saw the colt come tearing across the meadow scattering flying clouds of new turf behind him. It was a fine spring day with a southwest wind and hurrying clouds and a smell of the budding woods beyond the clearings, and Abigail smiled at the little horse's frolicsomeness. But a moment later she frowned. Jenny, the old mare, had appeared at a more ponderous gallop and was wheeling and stamping by the gate.

"Something has disturbed the horses, sir," she said, turning to her father. "Do come and see."

Mr. King moved from the fire to the window and chuckled as he watched Jenny and her colt. He pinched his daughter's cheek.

"It's the fine gaiety of spring, my child," he said. "Something has disturbed the robins. Hear how they are singing in your mother's lilac bush."



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Mrs. King, who had been clearing away the bowls and pewter from the table, hesitated and then spoke.

"You don't think it could be savages, Enoch?"

"The crow's have all flown up," said Abigail quickly from her place by the window. Her face was grave.

Her father gave a grunt of impatience.

"You women dream of savages," he said. "If you hear a mouse in the wall, it's a savage; if a bull-frog croaks, it's a war-cry to you. There's no trouble with the tribes—and here is the Preble's garrison house a stone's throw from our back door. You're as safe as if you were living in Pemaquid Fort."

Mrs. King went softly out with the dishes and Abigail said nothing more. Her father was one of those large good-natured men who laugh a great deal, but who are quickly made angry by any argument.

Abigail slipped out to the woodpile where her brother was splitting firewood.

"John," she said, "something's wrong. The horses are wild, and the crows are flying up. Father says it's high spiritedness, but the sheep are huddling, too. That's not high spirits."

John gave a hasty look, spit on his hands and went on splitting wood.

"You and Mother are a couple of scare-cats," he said. "Sheep are always huddling about something or other. You don't catch Aunt Phipps worrying over nothing."

John was only fourteen, a year younger than Abigail, but lately he had taken to aping his father's hearty ways.



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Aunt Mary Phipps, Mr. King's widowed sister who lived with them, was the same. She had three little children, Eunice and Samson and Lydia, all round-headed and round-eyed and casual. Even down to fat dimpling Lydia they seemed to go deaf, if anyone tried to tell them that they were doing a thing the wrong way.

"It may have been a fox," thought Abigail to herself. "There is no reasonable reason for my feeling so sure that the savages are near."

But all day long she went about her work, more silent than usual, and seemed to be listening for something. Her father and Aunt Phipps, young John and the children were busy and boisterous all day, but her mother looked tired and anxious.

The other member of the household to seem disturbed was Mittens, the cat, a big gray tom who followed the family about like a dog and would even walk a mile or two with them. This day he mewed about people's feet, and seemed unable to keep still, moving from one favorite spot to another.

In the evening while Mrs. King was spinning by the fire and Aunt Phipps and Abigail knitted on the settle and the little children played a game of fox and geese with red kernels of corn and yellow kernels on a square they had marked with charcoal on the floor, and Mr. King and John smoked their pipes, the talk came around to the tawnies.

Aunt Phipps said with a chuckle to her sister-in-law, "Sister King, your new quilted pelisse will be handy,



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if Abigail's savages take you off to Canada. And I shall wear my red cloak."

Mr. King and John laughed, but Mrs. King said with sudden vehemence,

"I pray that God will let me die at their hands before He allows me or mine to be carried away!"

"I was but teasing you," said her sister-in-law with a touch of annoyance. "Pray you, do not fly off with so much earnestness."

Mittens mewed at Abigail's feet and jumped into her lap. She rubbed his head and ears, but he would not purr. Soon he had jumped off again, and recommenced his prowling. She was wondering if she, too, would rather be tomahawked than taken. She had heard such dreadful accounts of the journey to the Indian towns on the St. Lawrence, of death and torture by the way. But some had come back full of praise of the French and even of the Indians. Old Benjamin Glazier, who had been their prisoner for three years, said he preferred tawnies to white people. But then, he was a cross-grained old man fond of taking the opposite side of any and every discussion.

Abigail in her little room at the head of the stairs slept all night long, tired out with her anxiety. Once she woke to feel Mittens jump on her bed, a thing he had rarely done before, but she was soon asleep again. In the morning, however, she was disturbed by finding several foot-prints in the soft earth under the windows. Aunt Phipps, her arms full of the wet clothes she was bringing out to



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spread on the grass, came up to her as she stood examining the marks.

"Bless us, child," she exclaimed. "You're still fretting over your savages. No, they don't look like moccasin tracks to me. But I did see young John there yesterday morning, cleaning up last year's rubbish. You take my advice, Abigail, and think of something else."

That morning her father announced that he meant to make use of the good weather and take some grain to the town to be ground and a couple of lambs for sale. John was to go with him and they would not be back until late that night.

"But Enoch," began Mrs. King in her anxious voice.

"But nothing, Mary!" cried her husband. "Pluck up heart, my love! Look at Sister Phipps here. She's not afraid. There's no danger, or I shouldn't be leaving you and that you well know. But if any more of Abigail's crows fly from one field to another, you have only to run over to the Prebles' and you'll be perfectly safe at the garrison house."

"There's only the old man and Mr. Preble," ventured Mrs. King, but she stopped at her husband's angry look.

"You two will drive me mad with your whining," he exclaimed, shrugging his shoulders impatiently. "Come, wife, don't play the coward. Give me a cheerful fare-yewell and no more nonsense."

An hour after Mr. King and John had ridden away the Indians came. They had evidently been watching from the woods and waited only until the two were well



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out of hearing of gunshot. There were five of them, their faces streaked and splashed with vermilion and black, set off with bright blue, naked except for their breech clouts, but each with a good French gun over his arm. They separated and approached the house from different sides.

Aunt Phipps had time to snatch Eunice from the doorstep and bolt the door. Abigail ran to fasten the shed door and came back to find that her aunt had got the loaded gun down from the mantel.

"I'll fill those tawnies with lead," she was saying. "I never yet was afraid of any man, white or red!"

Abigail's mother snatched at the barrel.

"You must do nothing of the sort, Sister Phipps!" she said quickly and commandingly. "You could never hurt more than one and they would kill all your children. They can knock a hole in this flimsy house in five minutes and fire through it. I'm going to let them in. It's our only chance."

"You've gone mad with fear!" cried Aunt Phipps, shouldering the lighter woman aside once more.

"Abigail!" said her mother, and Abigail snatched the gun unexpectedly from her aunt and stood with it behind her.

"Quick, Mary!" said her sister-in-law. "Take the babies and get into the kitchen closet. When I let them in, the way to the garrison house will be clear. While I am feeding them, Abigail and you are to get the children over the stockade and into the Prebles'."



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"But they'll kill you, for certain, Sister King!" cried Aunt Phipps, wringing her hands.

"If they do, you and the children will still have a chance while they're at it," said Mrs. King.

There was a battering at the door.

"I'll stay with you, mother," said Abigail. "I'll look more natural. But you must promise to go first and help Aunt Phipps with the children. I shall never stir from here while you're in the house."

Her mother gave her a quick look, sighed and nodded. Aunt Phipps and her brood were gone.

"Bring the rum and mugs, child," she said and smoothing out her skirts, walked over to the door and opened it with a strained smile. Two savages rushed in, brandishing their tomahawks. At their yell, the others ran from behind the house and poured in also.

"Rum," said Mrs. King, smiling still and pointing to the table, where Abigail, her heart pounding in her throat, had brought out rum and mugs. As she turned her back, she saw one of the savages snatch at the string of gold beads about her mother's neck. The chain that held them broke and the beads fell in a shower over the floor, several rolled about her feet, and at the same moment she heard the sharp slap of her mother's hand on the Indian's arm, but she walked steadily over to the cupboard and came back with a plate of Johnny cake. When she turned, she saw that the savages were laughing. They greedily grabbed the bread and began eating it in large mouthfuls. They were very hungry.





Two savages rushed in, brandishing their tomahawks

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Her mother went into the next room and came back with a half-eaten leg of cold lamb which she set before them. As she went out again, for an instant her eyes met Abigail's to tell her that she was going to try to make her escape. She had been gone only a minute when one of the Indians made as if to follow her.

Abigail had an impulse to throw herself in front of the door. Instead, she climbed on to a chair and began to search the upper shelves of the cupboard beside the mantelpiece, smacking her lips. The Indian halted to watch her. She must take as much time as she could, but she must not lose their interest. She rummaged noisily, hoping to cover creaking floor-boards or the gentle opening of a door. Just as she felt the Indian about to move again for the kitchen, she brought down the keg of molasses which she knew was kept there away from the children, and setting it on the table brought five wooden plates on which she placed more Johnny cake over which she poured the molasses, watched by five pairs of un-winking eyes. She was all alone in the house with the Indians, but by this time she was so excited that she had passed into a sort of calm in the middle of the storm.

"Eat!" she said, smiling as her mother had smiled, and gave each a plate into which they dipped their hands, greedily, dripping and sticky.

They had never tasted the stuff before and were lost in the pleasure of the moment. The room reeked with the odor of rum and bear's grease. The girl brought them more corn bread and poured more molasses for them.



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Surely even heavy Aunt Phipps must be over the stockade fence now. The black eyes glittered at her from the painted masks of the savages' faces. She could not tell whether they suspected her or not. She walked over to the fireplace and mended the fire. Three minutes more. At any moment they would be wondering what had delayed her mother and then she would be lost. She took a platter from the dresser as though to bring in still more food and walked into the next room. A glance showed her that the cupboard door was open, and the cupboard empty, tho' the outside door had been closed again, probably to avoid a tell-tale draught. It would be her mother who would think of that. She put down the platter, opened the door softly, and as she closed it felt something at her feet. It was Mittens, looking terrified. She caught up the cat. He should not be left to those devils, if she could help it, and then gathering her skirts with her left hand to keep them from catching in the spring brambles, she ran towards the stockade fence a hundred yards away. She saw her mother's white face in an upper window of the garrison house, then she heard a shout behind her, caught her foot in a bramble and pitched headlong, flinging Mittens forward as she fell. She was up in a moment, stumbling over her skirts. She saw the Indians running towards her. One was standing leveling his gun. She ran forward, ducked suddenly to pick up Mittens, heard a shot ring over her, where her head had been, and ran on. She saw Mr. Preble's face appear over the stockade wall.



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"Quick, Abigail!" he shouted, reaching down for her. She threw the clawing cat over the six-foot stockade, held up her wrists, and in a moment felt herself being dragged painfully up the rough side of the wall and hauled to safety.

Once on the ground, Mr. Preble caught her about the waist and ran towards the garrison house. Another shot rang out behind them, answered by a shot from one of the upstairs windows, the door flew open, women's hands drew them in to the semidarkness of the room and the door was bolted again.

"Oh, my love!" cried Mrs. King, seizing Abigail in her arms. "I feared you would never come out of that house alive."

"It's you two we have to thank for our lives," said Aunt Phipps, red and serious. "I owe you an apology, Sister King, for calling you a coward."

"But I *am* a coward," said Mrs. King, trembling and smiling. "I must get back to making my bullets. You may have your chance, now, Sister Phipps, of shooting a tawny."

Old Grandfather Preble appeared for a moment at the head of the stairs.

"Got one, I think," he called. "They're going back into the house."

Abigail followed Mr. Preble up to the second story. Downstairs the shutters had all been closed, but here the light shone sweetly in upon the wide boards of the floor and the quilted covers of the feather beds. Swallows were



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flying back and forth across the sky and beyond the pines she caught a curve of the river glistening in the sun.

Let them burn her father's house, if they would. It was only flesh and blood that counted. She sat down on the floor, tired out but curiously peaceful.

Perhaps her father would take warning next time, but she knew he would not. He would build another house, he would cut timber and haul it with oxen, he would take his lumber to the sawmill and raise a roof-tree again, he would furnish and furbish and her mother would spin and weave a new supply of linen and wool, and when all was done her father would forget that he had lost everything once through his own fault.

Perhaps John was young enough to have learned something from all this. No one would ever call her mother a coward again, at least.

Crows were wheeling black against the sky. Something had disturbed them. Yes, there were figures moving out along the lane towards the north. Two of them were carrying a wounded Indian on a litter made of the back of the settle; the other two were laden with the covers of feather beds filled with loot.

"Mr. Preble!" she called. "The Indians are going!"

"I've been watching them," he said regretfully. "Too far off to get a shot. Father, you stay here and fire off your gun, if you see them turn, and Abigail and I will look if they've set the house on fire."

They found the King place in great confusion, everything pulled about and the feathers flying like snow.



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The fire had been hauled out onto the floor but was only charring the stout boards: a couple of buckets of water from the well turned it to black soot and wet cinders. The Indians had taken all the food they could lay hands on, a few knives and ornaments, the gun which Abigail had snatched from Aunt Phipps' hands and rehung over the old mantelpiece.

"You have been fortunate," said Mr. Preble. "If only—"

Abigail understood. The Indians had been in hiding for at least a day before they made the attack; they had watched the family at supper through the windows; they had come, finally, when the women were defenseless. Now although they had seemed to go north, they might still be lying in wait somewhere for the return of Mr. King and John.

Abigail opened the door and looked out. The light was golden with late afternoon and two butterflies passed in zigzag flight. Beyond the fields and meadows the crows were beginning to roost, lighting in the tops of the beeches and uttering their usual cries. Then a shape moved along the side of the house and Mittens sat down solidly on the doorstep and began to smooth his ruffled coat with a white paw.

"No," said Abigail, laughing a little hysterically. "I'm sure father and John are safe and the savages altogether gone. Mittens is washing his whiskers."



Drums in the Fog

by Rupert Sargent Holland

SO THEY'VE SENT two armed ships from Boston to help us fight the Abenaki," Eben Treadway jeered. "Heap o' help they'd be in sech fog as this."

"You keep your mind on your bizness," cautioned Adam Libby, "or we'll be settin' atop a rock an' the canoe won't have no bottom."

The two paddled a few minutes in silence. "You shore you're headin' right?" Eben asked from the bow. "I want'er git to Saco, not somewheres out in the ocean."

The paddler at the stern didn't deign to reply, and Eben went on: "Thought you told us when we left Casco the stars 'd keep on shinin' and we'd be home by sun-up. Guessed wrong, didn't you, Adam? I'm shamed o' you."

"'Twarn't Adam that said it," pointed out John Hunnewell, who sat in the canoe's middle beside the three long-barreled rifles, each of which had a deerskin



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flap to protect the priming; "'twas you, Eben. Fog's allus blowin' in an' out in July."

"Supposin' the men at the fort guessed wrong about the Injuns?" Eben queried. "'Tis known they've been movin' from their up-river villages to the shore since early summer."

"They allus do that," said Adam, "to fish an' shoot seals."

"Mayhap," Eben conceded doubtfully; then added: "Seems as if I heard drums. Might be they're aboard one o' those ships from Boston they told us of."

"It's the surf on Cape Elizabeth," said John. "Fog allus makes everything sound muffled."

"T'other side the Cape there be heaps o' ledges," Adam stated. "Jest crawl along, Eben, so you won't ram the bow."

At a snail's pace through the dark, that seemed to be made all the blacker by the dense curtain that resembled dripping wet wool, the canoe crept on. Saco lay only some twenty-five miles south of Casco on the Maine coast and the three young fellows had made the journey by water—always safer and easier than by land—many times and in all sorts of weather. This time they had gone to the fort to discover if there was any ground for the rumors that the French, in spite of their professions of friendship for the English settlers, were secretly urging the Indians to attack the villages from the St. Croix River to the York. The French had done this before, and might be doing it again this summer of 1703. In Casco



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they had been told that the Kennebec country appeared quiet for the moment, but that the garrison was on the alert and two sloops with heavy guns were standing off the coast.

Steadily the paddles dipped and rose. Adam Libby, a yellow-haired giant just turned eighteen, could outwrestle any man in Saco, so broad were his shoulders, so powerful the muscles of his long arms and legs. He stood six feet three in his moccasins and every time he dug blade in water his hunting shirt of brown linen with green fringes tightened to the breaking point across his chest. Steady of nerve, slow of speech but quick to think and act was he, and equally at home on stormy ocean or in trackless woods.

Eben, a year younger than Adam, was black-haired, wiry, slim, and as talkative as the other was silent. Because they were so different each admired the other immensely, and they were usually together, Eben slyly teasing Adam, who quietly grinned at the taunts and nodded his tawny mane. The third member of the party, John Hunnewell, was the son of the minister at Saco and was already something of a scholar, although there were few books in his father's house. His broad brow spoke of intelligence, his gray eyes were thoughtful; but life in the seaboard settlement—a constant battle with physical hardships—had made him supple and strong.

They had left the cape some distance behind when there was a sudden grating noise beneath the canoe's bottom and Eben, crouched in the bow, was thrown for-



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ward on his knees. "Now I've done it, sure done it!" he muttered. "Curse me for nappin'. I must ha' been asleep."

"You've run us on one o' those ledges," John said; "but likely 'tis covered with seaweed an' won't do no harm."

"I'll pole 'round," said Eben. "Hold your end steady, Adam, while I see what we've struck."

"We can't be nigh any beach," said Adam. "Howsomever, mayhap we be off the east shore o' Richmond Island."

The island he named was not in the direct course from Casco to Saco, but lay somewhat to the west between the two horns of a bay. On such a night, however, any voyagers might quite excusably have deviated from a bee-line. "Mayhap," grunted Eben, and, handling his paddle as a pole, he cautiously stepped from the canoe to the kelp that clothed the rock.

Clutching the seaweed in his fingers, he explored the ledge on which they had grounded. "Might be the island," he declared. "The rock slopes up to westward above sea."

"Tide must be about full," John pointed out.

"Likely so," agreed Adam. "Well, if it be the island, there'll be more ledges to the south, an' if we strike another we might git a hole in our bottom."

"I'll take Eben's place," John offered. "I ain't so sleepy as he."

"'Twas Adam's steerin'," scoffed Eben. "He et too



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much in Casco an' fell to nappin', the big bear."

Adam gave a deep-throated chuckle. "By gum, the little monkey's right! An' so, seein' we're here an' no harm done, we'll jest stay till fog lifts or day comes. We'll pull the canoe up on the shelf an' set where 'tis dry."

The canoe, unweighted except for the rifles, was easy to lift, and although the seaweed was slippery beneath their smooth-soled moccasins the three shortly had their boat well above reach of the water and sat themselves down, their backs against the birchbark sides, their legs stretched out on a dry and level slab.

The fog was a blanket on eyes that had striven for long to pierce the darkness. The travelers eased their limbs, cramped by the journey in the canoe, yawned, made an effort to keep awake, then—chin pillowed on chest—were soon asleep.

When John opened his eyes he heard water dripping somewhere nearby, and thought perhaps it was running from one of the paddles that was stuck aslant in the canoe. The splashing ceased, then after a brief interval reached his ears again. Turning his head, he listened more intently; the noise sounded now more like a ripple, as though something were moving through water not far from the ledge.

He sat up; then, as the swish-swish continued he crawled noiselessly across the shelf toward the side on which they had landed. Now he could distinguish a pattern, a rhythm, in the sounds; a splash, a ripple, then



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the drip of water. Beyond question those noises and the other noises that had waked him were made by paddles wielded in canoes.

The noises vanished; then, after a minute, new ones took their place. Another canoe must be passing the ledge; the third since the drip of water he had heard when he awoke. Four canoes! That was something to wonder about on a night of thick fog. On hands and knees he crept back to Adam, shook him gently, put a hand on his mouth to stifle a snort of surprise.

"Canoes!" he whispered in Adam's ear. "I've counted four, headin' south."

Instantly Adam was awake and quickly snaking across the rock to its seaward edge. John woke Eben, and the three lay just above the seaweed and listened to the recurrent light splashes and ripples that came through the fog. After a while, when the noises had ceased and were not resumed, Adam nudged his companions and the three crept back to the canoe. "A dozen—twenty mayhap—mayhap more," Adam whispered. "Injuns—Abenaki—raidin' Richmond Island."

The others agreed. Such a string of canoes, paddling through a night of fog, could only be explained by Indians on the war-path. They had probably come from the cape to the north, where they fished in summer, and now, having rounded the eastern cliffs, were making for the only beach on the island, a stretch of sand on the southern side.

And on Richmond there was a trading-post, where



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Walt Trant in times of peace did business with the redskins and the English and French fishing vessels that frequented the coast; there were also a score of English families that farmed the upland meadows as well as fished, a settlement of perhaps a hundred people, with a garrison house and stockade. No one on the island, which lay a mile or more out from the mainland, would be expecting an attack at this time; no sentry, supposing one were posted, would be able to see a foot in such fog. Indians attacked at dawn or a little before. Men, women and children would be wakened by ear-piercing war whoops and tomahawked as they sprang from their beds.

"We must get to the post," said Adam; "climb the cliffs."

Quickly, but cautiously, for the night was inky black, they groped their way to the landward side of the shelf. A wall of rock confronted them, a wall without a fissure big enough to hold a finger. Adam, standing on tiptoe, stretched his arms above his head and touched a rock ceiling. "'Tis a cave in the cliff," he muttered; "th' only way out is on the water side."

On the seaward slope of the shelf they crept out across the kelp to the edge. Eben thrust his hand down. "Tide's fallen since we landed," he said.

John picked a fat snail, dropped it over the edge, listened for the splash. "Tide has fallen," he agreed. "We must ha' slept a long while. Dawn'll be soon."

"Six feet, more mayhap," said Adam. There was a great fall of tide in summer along that coast, as they



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knew. "Injuns will be landin' now, an' we've got to fol-
ler an' git to the post afore they do."

To launch a canoe from that high shelf in that black-
ness was not easy, but they set about the work at once.
First they lifted the canoe and set it above the edge;
then, as John and Eben lay flat on the seaweed, Adam
grasped a hand of each in his fingers and squirmed back-
ward over the rim. Down he went until his feet touched
water, then a small ledge, where kelp, slippery as glass,
crackled beneath his weight. Gaining his balance, he
whistled, and the other two freed his fingers. Standing
up, John and Eben took the paddles and rifles from the
canoe, and then tilted it, bottom up, until Adam, legs
astraddle, could grasp its sides in his hands. As Atlas
held the world on his shoulders, so Adam Libby, crouch-
ing on the seaweed, held the canoe. A slip of the foot
might have wrecked it beyond repair, but Adam did not
slip; slowly and carefully he pivoted on the ledge until
he could lift and then lower the canoe safely to a mat of
seaweed just beyond his perch.

Puffing and wheezing, he rested a minute; then,
planting his feet wide apart, muttered, "Now, Eben."

Eben, his hands held by John above him on the shelf,
swung down until Adam could grip him and place him
on the ledge.

"Keep your feet," Adam directed. "Now, John, hand
down the rifles an' paddles an' Eben'll put 'em in the
canoe."

The three rifles and the paddles were lowered and laid



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in the bottom. "Ready, John," said Adam. "Eben, stand by to ketch him."

John swung down; but with no one to anchor his hands on the shelf his fingers slid through the seaweed and he catapulted full upon the two below. Adam clutched him, but clutching, his feet slipped, and his big frame struck Eben, who was flung sprawling against the canoe. The impact capsized the light birchbark and sent it rocking bottom up away from the ledge.

It was the work of a minute or two for three agile swimmers to lay hands on, right the canoe and climb aboard. But the rifles were gone, sunk to the bottom. The paddles, however, were floating on a net of seaweed, and John and Adam recaptured them.

John, at the bow, fended off from outjutting rocks while Adam with a mighty sweep curved the canoe east and then south. The fog curtain was not so densely black now; they could dimly see eddies of mist, like smoke spirals, blowing on the surface of the water. They would have to chance striking rocks, and chance it John and Adam did as they drove their bark round the cliffs at the corner of the island. The canoe shivered at the headlong pace, and more than once John felt the scrape of barnacles against the side and only by a hair's breadth swerved the bow from destruction; but on they raced and on until they could hear the lapping of waves on a sandy beach and swung the canoe in to shore.

Except for the grating of water on pebbles there was no noise on the beach, nor could they hear any sound



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in the woods that led upward to the garrison house and farms in the centre of the island. The Abenaki would now probably be gliding stealthily among the trees. And dawn was almost come; a little wind was blowing the fog in gray whorls.

Quickly they lugged the canoe above the tide. Eben, stepping hastily away, muttered: "Injun canoes beached here—a row of 'em!"

"'Tis a mile to the post," said John. "How are we goin' to git there afore the redskins?"

He knew it would be a miracle if they succeeded, for the Indians would undoubtedly be making a circle around the settlement.

"Wait a bit," said Adam. "I mind there's a shed along here an' there might be some muskets or fowling pieces."

Instantly they ran from the beach to the sloping shingle. "Here 'tis!" cried Adam and jerked a shed door open.

In the faintly gray light they could see little, but they searched hurriedly for any sort of firearm. They found boxes and barrels, some small kegs, several coils of tarred hemp rope, some paddles and fishing-poles, a pile of dried seal pelts that would be fashioned into moccasins; but no musket, rifle nor firearm of any description.

Again they stood on the shingle. "We've got to chance it," muttered Adam. "Fog may help us." He loosened the hunting-knife in its sheath at his belt.

"Where's that armed sloop from Boston?" Eben growled. "Wish I could hear those drums!"



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"Drums," echoed John; and suddenly exclaimed, "Why not? Drums! We kin wake the folks at the post long afore we could git up there!"

"How?" snapped Adam.

"The kegs, the seal pelts. We've made 'em in Saco." Already John was in the shed, his hands on a keg. The first was too heavy to lift, but the second he flung through the doorway and followed it with two others that were likewise empty. Within a very few minutes the head of each keg was covered with dried sealskin bound in place by tarred rope and lengths of fishing-poles had been made into drumsticks. Each keg was suspended from a drummer's shoulders by a loop of rope fastened to the top hoop, and no sooner was the work done than from the shingle came a loud pulsating roll that couldn't have been bettered in the fort at Casco. Each of the three had drummed before in sport on similar improvised instruments; now, in the need of waking those in the houses above and warning them of danger, each drummer beat with all the strength and skill he could muster.

On the shore the noise was deafening; only when it stopped for a moment could the clamor of indignant gulls be heard. "'Tis louder than a landin' party from a ship!" Eben exclaimed exultantly. "Injuns'll think 'tis a hull army."

"At it agin!" shouted Adam. "Forward march, my bullies!"

Plying the drumsticks lustily, they marched from the



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shore to the woods. The fog was lighter now; it curled away from the ground so that juniper and bay and straggling ranks of pines and firs were visible. Then from somewhere in the centre of the island there was the roar of a musket shot. Another and another. "They've heard us!" cried John. "God be praised!" And slipping the strap of the drum from his shoulders, he flung drum and sticks into a clump of bushes.

The crackle of musketry continued as the other two followed John's example. "That might be the redskins' guns," Eben said.

"No," said Adam; "Injuns 'd use tommyhawks till the settlers fired their guns. Walt's men will be drivin' the varmints from the garrison house."

"They'll make this way," said Eben, "to git their canoes."

"Not if they think there's a landin' party down here," John pointed out.

Adam considered a moment. "A landin' party 'd march up to the garrison house. Redskins 'd sneak through the trees an' ambush 'em on the road."

"If I hadn't dumped those rifles!" Eben groaned. "We can't fight 'em with knives an' paddles."

"No," grunted Adam; "not three agin' a couple o' score." Suddenly he flung his head up, like a deer startled by a rustle. The next second a tomahawk whizzed past his ear and crashed against the bole of a pine beyond his head.

Adam dropped as if the tomahawk had hit him; so



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did the other two. Dimly they saw a brown figure glide among the trees. The fog hid it, and noiselessly each snaked on his belly away from the cart road to the screen of pines.

Meanwhile the musket fire kept up its crackle, that sounded like the snapping of dry sticks, on the summit of the island. By now the Abenaki, thwarted in their surprise attack and thinking a party of Englishmen had landed in their rear, would very likely be coming down through the woods to gain their canoes. Perhaps also to secure some white men's scalps. Soon the three who lay motionless among the trees heard the soft padding of feet as moccasins crunched on moss and pine needles.

Then a gap in the fog showed them an Indian crouched by a stump across the road. For a moment they saw the shaven skull with its scalp-lock adorned by an eagle's feathers, the copper-hued cheeks streaked with red and yellow, the crafty, cruel, beadlike eyes, the oiled and painted body, naked except for breech-clout and moccasins.

Fog shut out the crouched figure, but even as it disappeared Adam cleared the space in a single bound and, falling on the greased body, pinned down the arm that had been about to fling a tomahawk. Adam's hunting-knife rose and fell; then, wrenching away the tomahawk, he stuck it in his belt and jumped to his feet. Whirling about, he caught John and Eben each by a shoulder. "To the rocks east of the beach!" he panted in a whisper.



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The Indians were coming down through the woods in a far-flung line. There was no trail through the forest, where branches intertwined and underbrush was thick. But the cart road was still open, and it led to the shore. Eben sprang over the rutted ground, John at his heels, while Adam, dripping knife in hand, brought up the rear.

They had covered scarcely a dozen yards when a wild guttural yell told them that they had been seen, or at least heard. From the depths of the forest behind them rose the Abenaki war whoop that shrilled up and up until it seemed to split the very sky.

A bullet spat against a tree above Eben's head, and instinctively he swerved a little, then redoubled his pace. John, back of him, caught his right foot in a cart rut, wrenched his ankle, sprawled on a knee; but Adam, thrusting his mighty arm round his comrade's middle, dragged him up to his feet again and ran on beside him. "Only a jump or two now," he grunted in John's ear.

Fortunately the fog cloaked them and the bullets that pursued them spattered harmlessly among the trees. The feet of the runners struck the stones of the shingle, then the sand of the beach. To the right was the shed, in the centre lay the canoes, on the left ramparts of rock rose, walling in a series of small coves, until they joined the granite cliffs that stood high above the ocean.

Eben hesitated. "Canoe?" he panted.

"No; they'd fill us with bullets," Adam wheezed.

A bullet spattered on the water; the yells were louder,



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nearer now; some of the warriors were almost on the beach.

Across the sand to the rocks the three ran, scrambled over the ridges, dropped on their knees. They were gasping and dripping with sweat, which rolled from their brows and blinded them. "Now we'll rest a bit," Adam mumbled. "Mayhap they'll take to their canoes."

"They'll see there ain't no landin' party," Eben argued.

"Mayhap Walt's men will be comin' down," John said as he rubbed the ankle he had wrenched in the rut.

The musket fire from the garrison house had now, however, ceased, and it was probable that the white men, having successfully driven off the enemy, were not minded to pursue them to their boats. In that case the Abenaki, who now held the shore, might stop long enough to capture the foe who had fled before them to the water's edge.

There were yells from the beach, from the woods. "They kin git us from the high ground," Adam pointed out; "so lie close in under the rock. If only that varmint I knifed hed a gun an' bullet pouch 'stead o' a tommyhawk!"

"If only one o' them Boston ships would fire a round shot among 'em!" Eben jeered.

They were crouched in the lee of a sloping rock halfway between sea-meadow and water. In the fog, and with luck, the enemy might not locate them, or, deciding their scalps were not worth the hunt, might take to their canoes and paddle off to the mainland. But the fog



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was not to be depended on; the sun was now well up and before its warmth the veil of mist blew now this way, now that, like a curtain at an open window. "We might swim east'ard," Eben muttered musingly; "might snake along this wall to the water—. . ."

The curtain dissolved, and there in the meadow, not forty feet away, stood a thick-set, bow-legged Indian with a long-barreled rifle in his hands. The black eyes glinted as the Abenaki sighted his quarry, defenseless before him; with an evil grin he lifted the gun to his right shoulder and carefully aimed. The rifle barked; but as it did the man toppled sideways and came in a heap to the ground.

Adam Libby had been trigger-quick. In that instant of lifting and aiming he had jerked the tomahawk from his belt and hurled it with all the force of his massive shoulders. Since boyhood he had practised the art and had become as adept as the Indians themselves, by whom a tomahawk was considered a more deadly weapon than a gun within a range of forty feet.

The rifle had slid from the Indian's hands and lay just at the edge of the shingle. Eben leaped forward, covered the distance, and grasped the gun by the barrel. As he did so Adam reached him, and gripping him by the back of the shirt lugged him to shelter. "They'd git you sure, you fool!" muttered Adam. "Afore you could tear off his bullet pouch you'd be chock-full o' holes."

Eben looked at the gun, propped across his right leg. The brown of his breeches at his right thigh was reddening in a circle and there was a hole in the linen. "Bul-



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let must've hit me. Come to think of it, I felt somethin' sting me in the leg."

Adam said: "You can't walk nor swim; but I kin tote ye. Lucky you're small. Fog's blowin' in agin."

"Tote me where?" asked Eben. "Out to the Boston ship?"

"To the next p'int o' rock," said Adam. "They know we're in this cove, so we'll move to another." Swiftly he yanked the sweat-wet shirt over his shoulders and head, then, draping the garment on the stock of the rifle, he leaned the gun against the ledge. "That'll be us; least-ways in the fog. They'll see it wavin'. Now up with you, monkey, while they can't aim."

In spite of Eben's protests that he could hobble, Adam picked him up and flung him over his shoulder like a bag of meal. Stooping, the big fellow loped like a wolf through the fog to the next rock rampart and on the other side of it laid his burden down. John followed; as he did so he heard yells of rage in the meadow; the Indians had found their tomahawked tribesman. Now more than ever would they lust for white men's scalps.

And they would get them, John thought, the next time the fog lifted. Eben was wounded, and Adam and he without firearms couldn't hold at bay that savage horde bent on their destruction. Reaching the rampart, he halted a moment, his subconscious mind busy. "If the Boston sloop would fire a round shot!" Eben had jeered. Those words had started a train of thought; now a project sprang at a bound to John's creative mind.



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He wouldn't speak of it to Adam and Eben; explanations would take time and none was to be lost. Instead of climbing the rampart, he darted to the water, waded in, and then swam in the direction of the beach and the canoes. He swam without noise and now and then stopped to listen. None of the canoes, he judged, had yet been launched; through the fog he could hear the voices of Indians on the beach.

When he had come to the west of the harbor he turned toward shore and waded to dry land. There he stopped, making sure that no one had heard him; then ran toward the shed on this side of the canoes.

The door was open, and, leaping in, he hunted in the semi-darkness for what he sought: the keg that had been too heavy to lift when he had wanted to make drums. In a moment or two he found it, and prying off the cover with his hunting-knife, he thrust in his fingers and scooped up some of the contents. Gunpowder by the feel. Some grains ran between his fingers to the earthen floor. With a heave of his shoulders, he toppled the keg on its side, so that some of the gunpowder lay heaped around it; then, working quickly, he laid a train of grains from the keg across the ground to the outer side of the shed. The fog was still thick, the water invisible from the shore. If it would only stay so for another five minutes! Crawling, he continued to lay the train some twenty-five yards or so across the shingle to a clump of junipers.

Fastened to his belt was his tinder-box, and from this



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he took flint and steel. A strip of linen sometimes served for tinder; but his shirt and breeches were soaking wet from his swim. Dashing again to the shed, he snatched up a piece of tarred rope and ran with it to the end of his powder train. It was the work of a second to shred a bit of the rope. Then with practised hand he struck steel on flint and blew mightily on the spark until it ignited the fuse of tarred rope fibre. He blew until the tinder was well aflame, then touched it to the grains of powder under the junipers. There was a minute explosion, a crackle, another puff. The train was fired, the little flames were traveling toward the shed; and, assured that they were well started, John jumped to his feet and crashed through the bushes across the meadow to the woods.

He was still stumbling upward, breathless with haste, when there was a roar that seemed to shake the whole island. Lurching into a pine, he slid to the ground and lay there, panting. The smell of powder was heavy on the air and the ground on which he lay still seemed to tremble. Then above him, from the centre of the island, there came a salvo of musketry. Walt Trant and his men were firing their guns in response to the explosion on the shore. John waited, fifteen minutes perhaps, then, getting to his feet, stole cautiously down to the shingle and stood there, listening.

He could hear paddles splashing in the water. Gradually the sounds receded, disappeared. Absolute silence now reigned on the beach; not even the squawk of a fishing gull reached his ears.



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He went down on the sand where the canoes had been. There were no canoes there now, not even the one in which Adam and Eben and he had set out from Casco the night before. On the beach lay a few bits of planking that had once been part of the shed.

The fog had vanished before the July sun when Walt Trant completed his bandaging of Eben's wounded thigh. "Bullet came out clean," Walt said; "you'll be spry as a chipmunk by summer's end." The red-bearded trader wiped the sweat from his forehead with his hairy arm and grinned at the three young fellows from Saco. "Likely the varmints 'd hed all our scalps if I hadn't heard them drums an' lit out o' bed to see what was comin'. Then I smelt Injuns—heap o' smell."

"I sure thought they'd ketched John," Adam said. "An' they was closin' in on Eben an' me from three sides when the powder keg exploded an' they took it fer a ship's round shot."

"What gits me," declared the trader, casting his eye on John, "is how in tarnation you thought o' thet, even if you be the son of a gospel preacher."

"Shucks!" said John, "'warn't me; that was Eben. He kep' on wishin' for that Boston sloop; wishin' fust he could hear her drums, and then that her gunners'd plump a shot among the varmints."

Walt considered a moment. "We'll, I reckon we've all got our hair on our heads 'cause o' that ship," he said with a wink.



Red Fox

by Margaret Rhodes Peattie

FAR AWAY he heard the sharp rat-a-tat-tat of the drum and then the thin sound of the fife piercing through with Yankee Doodle and then underneath, deep down like the heartbeat of the earth, the tramp-tramp of marching feet. They came around the corner, a long line of dusty figures with a tattered flag fluttering from the staff held by the stiff arms of a boy between the fife and drum, and behind him the men, guns sprouting from their shoulders. As they went by, Nathan Briggs hung on the picket fence and shouted:

“Hooray! Hooray!”

Then he heard his mother sob and turned to see her leaning against the blossoming pear tree, her face in her hands. Nat ran and threw his arms around her waist.

“Don’t you cry, Mom. Look how the soldiers go! They’ll beat the Rebs all right and then Pop will come home.”



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She wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron and drew the boy against her. "But the war is so long, son, and those prisons are terrible places. You don't know what war's really like. To you it's still all bugles and flags and guns over your shoulder. But it's swamps and pneumonia, too, and starvation in prison camps and fever. They say a man has to have a bullet with his name on it to get shot; that's luck. But there's lots besides bullets to kill a man in wartime."

"But, Mother, Camp Lebanon's not so bad. Susie Mason got a doll her Pop carved while he was there and it was awful nice." The soldiers had passed now and they were moving up the walk.

His mother shook her head sadly and went into the house. Nathan stood alone under the porch vines, pondering. For all he talked so cheerfully he was worried about his father too. He had heard his mother tell a neighbor that his father was sick with some kind of fever and, though no one had talked to him about it, he knew that was why his mother looked so sad. He guessed she was right. War wasn't all bugles and flags. But that boy marching at the head of the column had been jolly. He wished he could do something like that—something to help. And then he got his great idea!

"Mother!" he dashed into the house. But only his big sister Nettie answered him.

"Mother's gone over the back way to Grandma's. What're you yelling like that for, Nat? Can't you be nice and quiet once in a while like that Jones boy?"



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Shucks! Nat kicked at a chair. Nettie always told him to run along and wash his hands or something. Should he confide in her about his great idea? He hesitated, then he couldn't resist.

"Say, Nettie, I'm going to Camp Lebanon to take care of Pop. Mom was crying 'cause he's sick, and lots of boys like that boy with the flag are in the army and I can go to the camp and take care of him fine."

Nettie laughed and gave him a push. "Don't be silly! Run out and chop that wood. Why, Nat, the Town Council wouldn't let you go. You're too little. Twelve years old! Why they'd tie you up before they'd let you go."

"Oh, they would, would they? You're awful smart, Nettie Briggs, but you don't know everything."

Red and angry, Nat retired to the woodshed. He heard his sister singing as she swept out the kitchen and then he heard the front gate click and saw her go swinging her skirts down the street. Nat ran inside the empty house.

He went up to his own room and snatched his red blanket off his bed. He took some of his father's clean home shirts and fetched a side of bacon, some bread and a bottle of arnica and rolled them into a pack. He pinned a note to his mother's pillow: "I've gone to take care of Pop. Nat." And then, after reconnoitering carefully, he slipped out along the back ways of the town to the open road. He knew in a general way the direction of Camp Lebanon, and he planned to ask people along the road



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when he got away beyond any possibility of being known and returned to the Town Council.

By the time darkness fell, he was well out in the country tramping along between the hills. It was a long time since he had left the settlement and he had not been passing any farm houses. And here was a fork in the road; two broad rutted highways that stretched away into the dark and no sound came to call him down one way or the other. Right or left turn? He sent his opened jack-knife somersaulting through the air and stooped to see it splitting the ground where it stood upright.

The road to the right led off toward the higher hills which he could dimly see against the starry sky, and presently he entered a wood. There a deep, breathing silence folded down about him and from the trees which walled him in he fancied he saw eyes peering out at him. He began to whistle but the muffled echo made the place more lonely and he tramped on again into the still depths of the forest. Close by he heard a fox bark sharply twice, and overhead a night bird flapped away deeper into the wood.

"Shoot! That's a Union fox anyhow," he said to himself. "I won't be scared of any old fox nor owl neither. I wouldn't be fitten to live with the soldiers if I was scared like that!"

He squared his shoulders and tried to forget the Indian stories he had heard recently. In the Eastern states the Indians were now almost as unimportant as dinosaurs but they were to trouble the people of the West



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for fifteen or twenty years more and during the Civil War the Osage tribe still roamed the Ozarks, and the Cherokees had come up from Arkansas to fight in the skirmishes in Missouri. They fought with the Confederates and though the Yankee guns scared them off they usually managed to take away with them a few scalps for remembrance. The boy's imagination had been fired by the report of these occasional forages and he now saw skulking Indians in every clump of underbrush.

And surely that was the glint of a campfire between the trees! He advanced cautiously and standing behind a big pine peered into the open glade. The smell of burning wood made the air pungent and the treetops were glowing with the reflected light of the fire. He saw a horse grazing peacefully beside a near-by stream and the silhouette of a lone man squatting before the fire. The man was holding a frying pan over the flames and the goodly smell of venison mingled with the wood smoke made the water run into Nat's hungry mouth. The stooping man rose and the firelight shone full on his face. Nat saw that a bushy beard covered his chin, and knew this was no Indian.

"Hi!" he cried, stumbling forward into the firelight. "Can I cook some bacon?"

"Well, young man, where'd you come from?" The man set down his frying pan carefully and took hold of Nat's shoulders, looking down into his face. "So! It's nought but a boy! Lost?"

"Well, mebbe I ben't so young as you take me for."



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Nat laughed, struggling to get his pack off over his head. "I'm going to Camp Lebanon where the soldiers are."

"Suppose you'll shoot some Rebels on the way. Brought your pop gun?"

Nat shook his tousled red head and laughed good-humoredly. "Nope. But maybe I could make me a bow and arrow. I'd like to shoot me a few of them Rebs all right." Suddenly his brown eyes grew earnest. "My father is sick in the prison camp at Lebanon and I'm going to take care of him. Is this the way there, do you know?"

"It sure is." The man answered him kindly. "But you better eat some of my venison and stay here for the night. In the morning you can go along with Sally and me. We're headed that way and she'll carry the two of us." He whistled to the sleek, black horse down by the creek and she looked up and whinnied. "That's right, Sally, say 'Howdy' to the gentleman!" He swept off his own broad-brimmed hat and bowed elaborately. "Andrew Ransome, at your service. What name do you go by?"

Nat gave his name and history while Ransome carved the venison. Then, between mouthfuls, Ransome told his own story. "I'm a doctor by trade and I heard they had a lot of sick people down at Lebanon so I came along. I was never out this way before though I've been going around from one camp to another all during the war. I patch up the fellows their cousins have blown to bits."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, the North and South are sort of cousins, aren't



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they? And two days ago, for instance, I made a blind soldier so he could see again. Took bits of shell out of his eyes."

Nat stared. He was used to doctors in tall hats and fancy vests with gold chains across their waistcoats. He looked uneasily at this man in the blue coat and grey pants with the old plaid shawl around his shoulders. "Be you a Rebel, Doc?"

"No, nor Union neither. I'm not in anybody's army. Here, catch this!" He tossed a piece of meat into the air. "And let's forget the war until tomorrow."

They slept by the fire, Nat rolled in the red blanket he had brought from home. He dreamed his mother came out on the front porch, crying and calling to him: "Come home, Nat, come home!" and he thrashed uncomfortably in his tightly wound blanket. He wasn't used to the hard earth for a bed and he couldn't seem to find a comfortable way to rest.

At last he opened his eyes. The grey light of dawn was turning the trees to ghosts, and a faint wind whispered in the upper branches. Down by the creek Sally stamped and he turned his head to look at her. Then he felt his body stiffen with the shock of meeting another pair of eyes.

He lay absolutely still, half closing his eyes. He was sure he saw a red-brown man staring back at him. Presently the man rose and moved silently away like a ghost through the ghostly trees. Not a branch had stirred at his passing.



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"Doctor Ransome! Doctor Ransome! Wake up! We got to go. I saw an Indian down there by the creek."

The doctor opened his eyes lazily. "Oh, it's the boy! Go on back to sleep, youngster!"

But Nat shook him by the shoulder, his hands trembling with excitement. "I *know* I seen an Indian. He's gone back for some of his friends, I bet. You better get up."

The doctor yawned loudly and burst his blankets. "O, well, since we're awake we might as well get an early start. But you can forget your Indian, my lad. You must have been listening to old women's stories. The Indians are all gone 'way out West. I come from back East myself but I never saw any Indians except the lazy hounds that hang around the main streets selling baskets and begging."

"No, sir. Doc, this was an Indian. I seen his feather sticking out of his top-knot. And anyways, nobody but an Indian could go so quiet."

The doctor handed Nat a piece of cheese and a thick slice of bread. "Well, here's your breakfast. I'll saddle Sally and we'll move on. Maybe we can make Lebanon by dinner time."

The sun was gilding the treetops as Sally fell into an easy canter. They had covered perhaps a leafy mile when the creek beside which they had camped swept in a sudden curve across their path. Sally brought up short, tossing her head and snorting.

"Pull up your legs, Nat, and hold the saddlebags high.



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The water looks at if it would cover her belly when we get to the middle." The doctor urged Sally into the cold stream.

They were shouting encouragement to the horse when suddenly their cries died in their throats. The doctor stiffened in the saddle and jerked on the reins. Sally reared with a great splash of water, turned, then reared and plunged again. No use! The silent, half-naked Indians swarmed on both banks of the stream and, glancing up and down the creek, they could see shadowy figures moving in and out between the trees.

"A pretty to-do!" the doctor muttered and leaned across Sally's neck to try to quiet her, for she evidently did not like the look of the hostile and silent men who had appeared in her path and she meant to trample them with her hooves. Now she emerged, wet and shining, and reared against the brown hand flung up to catch her bridle.

"How!" Nat called in a friendly way.

The doctor began to protest loudly but the Indians, expressionless and swift to move, bound their captives' arms behind them without speaking. A runner stationed himself at Sally's head and led her into line with the long column now mounted on ponies which had been concealed in the bushes.

Still without a word spoken they moved out along a narrow trail, and a half hour's steady going through the forest brought them back into the hills to a small, enclosed valley. The sun was well up by now and the glit-



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tering rocks, the forest-clad slopes, the cone-shaped tepees and the blue dome of the sky over all made the little valley barbarically gay. From the deerhide tents the Indians emerged at their approach, many of them bare to the waist, others wrapped in gaudy blankets, and the squaws with the inevitable papooses on their backs.

At a grunt from the man holding Sally's bridle, Nat and the doctor slid to the ground where they immediately became the center of a ring of curious onlookers. Nat glanced about him alertly. The doctor's hands were still bound behind him and before he and Nat had a chance for a real consultation the doctor was led off. A big Indian clamped his hand down on Nat's shoulder and propelled him in another direction.

At the doorway of a giant tepee Nat was made to stoop and, entering the dusky interior, he was confronted by an old man with wrinkled brown skin sitting cross-legged on a striped rug. He was staring straight before him and even when Nat's captor spoke to him in deep gutturals explaining, evidently, about the boy the old man did not turn his head.

Nat was feeling queer inside; he supposed he was about as scared as he ever would be in his whole life but he was the kind of boy who had such a big bump of curiosity that he would be foolish enough to try to count a lion's teeth just before it bit off his head. He stooped now to look closer into this strange old man's face.

The brave jerked him back angrily and, with a cuff across the side of the head, to Nat's surprise muttered



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in English: "No touch Medicine Man! He no see. Eyes no good."

"Oh, too bad!" Nat nodded his head sympathetically and stood quietly while his future was discussed in that language which sounded to him more like a dog growling than real speech. Presently some decision was reached for he was led away and thrust into another dark tepee.

"No come out. No move."

The flap was pulled down over the opening and he was left alone on the dirt floor to listen to his own heartbeats. Outside he could occasionally distinguish the sound of people passing but no one came near him or, as the day advanced, offered him any food.

✓ Nat was not a boy to sit idle forever, especially when his stomach was empty, and as the pangs of hunger increased his fear diminished. He crept to the edge of the tepee and after listening a moment began to dig like a dog in the hard earth. He soon had scooped out with his paws a small tunnel under the deerhide and by pushing his chin down into the dusty trench could look out into the clearing. Not six feet away he saw the Indian who had taken him to the Medicine Man. He was sitting with his back against a birch tree and his arms folded across his chest. Nat studied his face. So that was the way a real, wild Indian looked! There was something fascinating about his stern countenance—the thin curled lips, long nose and deep-set eyes under the black brows. His upper body was bare and he wore a pair of leather



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fringed trousers, very dirty, and his lank black hair was braided. He looked sharp and covetous. If only Nat had something worth trading maybe he could strike a bargain with this redman for his freedom—his and the doctor's. But of course they had taken Sally and the blankets and other things already. What had he and the doctor still left that they could swap with these Indians? Suddenly Nat's eye brightened and he squirmed out farther and called out sharply:

"Hi!"

The Indian started and jerked his head around until he looked into Nat's bright eyes peering up at him from under the tepee like those of a terrier. Scowling angrily, he crawled the few feet to the tepee.

"No!" he cried and, whipping his hand out, slapped Nat across the nose. But though he retreated, holding his stinging face in his hand, Nat called out briskly:

"Hey, you, come in here!"

The Indian stood in the doorway, frowning more angrily than ever. But, undaunted, Nat launched into his argument. "My friend white Medicine Man. Make blind man see. Make Indian Medicine Man see!" Nat passed his hand dramatically across his eyes and acted out a blind man who suddenly blinks his eyes in the light. "Go ask white doctor make Indian see, then by-and-by Indian let white people go free."

The Indian looked at him a moment incredulously and then, turning sharply on his heel, was gone. Nat waited once again in solitary silence. Last night Doctor



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Ransome had said he made a blind soldier see. It was a wild chance that he might be able to cure the old man but it was worth trying.

After what seemed a long time the Indian came back, pushing the doctor into the tepee before him.

"Well, Nat, you surely were right about there being plenty of Indians left in this part of the world," was his greeting.

But Nat interrupted excitedly: "Did you see the blind man, Doctor?"

"Oh, so you were the one who told them about me being a doctor, eh? Well, boy, maybe we're playing in luck. The old man seems to have cataracts and I've had some success operating on cataracts back home. We might be able to remove them."

Nat jumped up and down slapping the doctor on the shoulder. "Sure you can, Doc! I know you can. And this is their Medicine Man; he's sort of sacred, you know, and they'll be awful pleased if you cure him."

But an Indian was beckoning them to come out into the open field. The doctor's arms had been unbound and they walked out freely. Facing them was a big fellow, evidently the chief, and beside him stood the blind man. Behind them the whole tribe in motley dress was crowding.

"Tell them about it like it was play-acting," Nat suggested. "A man back home told me they understand it better that way."

Accordingly, Doctor Ransome stepped up to the blind



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man and, setting his hand under the wrinkled chin, tilted the head back so that he might look full into the opaque eyes. Then in a loud voice he cried to the assembled company: "White man make Indian see! Cut out devil." He made a quick swooping movement as if he held a knife in his hand and by an agile stroke slew an enemy. "Very hard and hurt very much kill devil." With an expression of dramatic pain he enacted the careful cutting of the growth from the old man's eye. "It's going to hurt him, Nat," he added under his breath. "Do you suppose he'll let me do it?"

"You can try anyhow. Indians are awful brave," Nat whispered.

"Run over to Sally, then—I see her in yon clump of trees—and fetch my saddlebags."

Nat sped like an arrow and returned, panting, with the bags weighting him down. He and the doctor swiftly unfastened the buckles and soon there lay displayed in the sunlight of that wild glade a row of more deadly instruments than any owned by those savages who looked on them with a fascinated stare. "I wonder if they understand these are weapons used against death, not life," the doctor murmured as he rose from his knees, having arranged the bright knives on a clean napkin spread on the grass. He took a step toward the old man and spoke to him directly.

"Indian afraid?"

The proud old head lifted. The Medicine Man understood what was before him for he gave a sharp com-



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mand and his features took on an even sterner cast. In a moment two Indians appeared bearing a great stone between them. This they set at the blind man's feet and he laid him down like a warrior composing himself for his last sleep, his blanket wrapped about him, his head pressed against the granite boulder.

"Kill devil!" he cried and raising one hand passed it swiftly across his sightless eyes.

"Nat, all the brave men aren't soldiers, remember that," Doctor Ransome observed as he rolled back his sleeves. "And, by the way, I need another stout fellow to hand me my instruments as I call for them. Think you can stand the sight of an operation?"

"Reckon so," Nat answered gritting his teeth, for a sort of chill was running down his spine.

"Never done this without some of that new drug, ether, to make the patient unconscious of the pain. Don't think he can stand it without someone to hold him. Here!" He motioned to an onlooker to put his hands on either side of the blind man's head and hold it firmly, but with a violent gesture the reclining Indian threw them aside and returned to an immobility like that of a figure hewn from stone.

With a shrug the doctor proceeded to the operation. He held the thin knife lightly between his fingers as if it were an artist's brush. The gruesome sight of the work going forward suddenly made Nat turn faint. He looked away quickly and encountered the unwinking gaze of an Indian boy of about his own age. The beady black



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eyes stared at him, Nat thought, contemptuously and the blood rushed back into Nat's cheeks as he turned to his job with a steady hand.

"Bandage, Nat," the doctor cried. And with triumph, "Done!"

He rose from his knees and signed to an Indian to help the sick man to his feet, but the old man rose unassisted and, turning about a moment as if to get his bearings, walked slowly toward his tepee.

"Tomorrow," the doctor told them, "Medicine Man see!" and added under his breath to Nat, "Pray God I was successful."

That night Nat and the doctor were well fed on broiled game and Indian meal. They were left to themselves in a tepee and, glad to be together again in spite of their anxiety for the morrow, they soon fell asleep, for they were exhausted by the tense events of the day. When they woke at last it was to the sound of tom-toms beating monotonously. As if in answer, the sun rose and flooded the opened doorway of the tepee with orange light.

Nat could not suppress a shiver as he listened to the weird throbbing of the drums but he managed a smile and whispered to Doctor Ransome, "That will mean they'll be coming for us soon, I guess." Doctor Ransome sat up and began to comb out his curly beard with his fingers in a way that made Nat laugh in spite of his fears. Nat followed his example and ran his hands through his tangled mass of red hair. While they were



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still engaged in making their toilets, a figure crested with eagle feathers stooped, beckoning, at the doorway.

Two lines of Indians stretched between them and the tepee of the Medicine Man, leaving a pathway for the doctor and the boy to walk between. The Indians had put on full ceremonial dress; the gorgeously dyed feathers of their head-dresses fluttered like the ruffled plumage of tropical birds; their tall, lank bodies were hung with glittering strings of beads and silver ornaments.

The doctor, closely followed by Nat, strode swiftly the length of the ceremonial pathway and entered the tepee. In a moment he emerged with the old man beside him. Signing for silence he clapped his hands, then raised them over the bandaged head; he clapped his hands again and then with a swift gesture made as if to pluck the devil from the bound eyes of the man before him.

"Now, off with the bandage!" he cried to Nat, at the same time spreading his arms wide as if to fling away the beast that had ravaged the old man.

The boy reached up and untied the white cloth. The old man stood winking in the bright burst of light. There was a moment's breathless silence and then the Medicine Man held up his hand and nodded slowly twice. A cry went up from the watchers and they surged forward. But Doctor Ransome held them back and pushed his patient into the darkened tepee.

"Medicine Man must stay in tepee seven days more.



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Devil stay seven suns in valley and Medicine Man stay in tepee where dark is. Then devil gone over the mountain and Medicine Man come out."

The onlookers nodded comprehendingly and the Chief spoke briefly to his people. At once a ring of Indians formed and began a solemn ceremonial dance to the accompaniment of the tom-toms. Nat and the doctor were led to places of honor where they sat throughout games and races and a feast of fowl and venison. At last the sun stood well overhead. As the white man and boy rose, a procession of Indians approached them from the direction of the Chief's lodge. They bore feathered head dresses which they set upon the two who had once been prisoners and were now honored friends. "Sun-Over-The-Mountain," they called the doctor, and the boy was hailed, "Red Fox." Around the doctor's neck they hung a string of wampum and at his feet they spread a beautiful buffalo robe embroidered in porcupine quills. And as a last surprise they lead out Sally followed by a little Indian pony the color of a red fox. The pony wore an Indian bridle with silver ornaments, and a bright blanket was tied where the white man had a saddle.

"Nat," said the doctor as they galloped down the trail pointed out by the Indians and came at last to the place where they had been taken prisoner, "between the two of us I turned out to be a pretty good doctor. Now don't you think you can trust your father to me? I'll be in Camp Lebanon tonight and I promise to find him right



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away and do everything possible for him. Don't you think maybe your mother needs you at home?"

Nat was silent a moment remembering that dream of his and his mother calling, "Come home, Nat, come home!"

The doctor glanced at him sharply. "I suspect your father told you when he went away that you were to take special care of your mother. Right?"

Nat looked startled and after a moment nodded sheepishly. "I reckon he did say something like that, Doctor, but I forgot. I was only thinking it would make mother feel better to have me taking care of *him* because I heard there wasn't enough doctors and nurses in those camps. But if you promise?"

"I promise!" the doctor answered earnestly and wrung the boy's hand across their saddlebows. "Good-bye, Red Fox!"

Nat swung his pony around toward home and waved his hand. "Good-bye, Sun-Over-The-Mountain!" he cried.



Augustus Meets His First Indian

by LeGrand

WHEN THE SUN rose, Augustus was standing in an open field dotted with pine trees. On the other side of a rail fence the woods rose thick and dark. An early-rising mountaineer had pointed out the edge of the woods as the boundary of the Indian reservation.

Now that he actually was here at last, Augustus felt a peculiar sensation in the pit of his stomach. He knew he liked Indians but would the Indians like him? He hadn't considered that before.

Now he thoughtfully slipped behind a tree to think about it. The rough bark felt scratchy but firm and safe as he pressed his face against the trunk and peered across the open field and into the woods beyond.

To Augustus' wide-eyed gaze, the trees over there



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looked different from the ones on his side of the fence. There was something wild and untamed about them, he thought. And it was so dark in those woods. The damp wood-smells that drifted out into the warmer, lighter air brought with them a tang of something darkly mysterious.

Augustus sniffed. "Hm," he thought, "I betcha those Indians haven't changed much."

He sidled out from behind his tree. With elaborate carelessness, he walked to another, nearer the woods. He repeated this maneuver until with a start he realized he was actually within the shade of the dark reservation forest.

At his feet a big pure-white toadstool gleamed against the moss-covered greenness of a rotting log. Augustus scowled. He knew the toadstool was about the most poisonous kind.

"Wonder if they use poison arrows?" he asked himself.

Not getting a reassuring answer, he slipped between two great boulders and studied the tangled undergrowth to his right and left. The big stone back of him seemed to have broken away from a still bigger ledge of rock that cropped out of a hillside. Augustus slid along the face of the ledge. It grew higher and higher until it was a great overhanging cliff. It was dark and damp under the cliff. Water trickled over the moss-covered rock and gathered in still, murky pools ringed with coarse, bitter-smelling marsh grasses.



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Augustus felt a sense of the great age of the place. The solemn silence seemed to cover dark secrets of other days, and over everything hung a feeling of mystery and of suspense.

Augustus snorted out loud to rid himself of the increasing nervousness which was creeping over him. His snort started a series of hollow-sounding little echoes which threw his snort back at him from all around.

There was another sound, too, which increased as Augustus came around a corner in the cliff. It was a rushing roaring sound. Looking ahead through the dark green of the trees, he saw a flash of frothy white tumbling down from the top of the cliff.

Augustus was accustomed to slow-moving streams and rivers winding calmly through flat lowlands, and the height and rushing roar of the waterfall astonished him. The stream below the falls tumbled among the rocks in fast-moving rapids that looked dangerous.

Augustus stopped and considered. He noticed that the main body of the water in the falls shot far out away from the face of the cliff. A veil of misty white hung over the opening between the water and the rock. But Augustus felt sure that this was just a thin spray and that back of it, between the waterfall and the rock, there was a big open space.

"I betcha I could walk right through there, back of the water, and right out the other side."

His eyes narrowed and he felt a thrill of joyous excitement as he braced himself for a dash into the waterfall.



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The chance for action came as a relief to Augustus who was always better at doing something than at worrying about what to do.

First he scrambled among the small loose rocks at the edge of the water. Then the cool breath of the mist veil touched him, followed by the unexpected shock of icy water beating on his head and shoulders. Then he was through and into the open space beneath the falls.

Puffing a little, he shook his head to clear the water from his eyes and looked around. Overhead the falls thundered past, forming the roof and one wall of the room-like space. A deep-looking pool stretched back, covering most of the floor. On the far side of the pool a few big rocks rose from the floor. Augustus blinked as he looked at the rocks. One of them had moved! Augustus wiped the spray from his eyelashes and looked again.

What he had thought was a rock was an Indian! A huge Indian who crouched, facing Augustus, and he had a spear raised above his head!

Augustus gasped, jerked backward, felt his foot slip on the wet rock, ducked, threw his arms out in front of him and yelled, "Hey!" all at the same time. Then he sat down hard, twisted sideways, and yelled, "Look out!" Straining his head back to see if the spear was coming, he saw the Indian looking amiable if a little puzzled as he pulled a wriggling, gleaming fish off the prongs of his spear.

Augustus felt his lungs begin to work again. Then he



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saw that the Indian wasn't eight feet tall as he had thought at first. In fact, the Indian wasn't any bigger than Augustus and seemed to be just about the same age. Although his broad dark face wore an expression almost as surprised as Augustus', he grinned at the same time.

Pointing to the wriggling fish, the Indian boy spread his hands far apart in a gesture any fisherman would recognize.

Although his breath was still coming a little unevenly, Augustus grinned. Nodding his head, he said, "Yeh, he is a big one."

Suddenly he remembered that he was talking to an Indian, and that he wasn't doing it as he should, according to the stories he had heard about Indians.

Slapping himself on the chest and looking stern and, he hoped, brave, Augustus said, "Ugh, me Augustus."

The Indian boy looked puzzled at first, then his eyes twinkled with amusement. But his face was serious when he said, "I am Lone Eagle."

"Ugh," said Augustus. "Heap big fish you catchum, ugh."

The twinkle in Lone Eagle's eyes grew into a grin that spread all over his face.

"Look," he said, "you don't have to try to talk like an Indian. I understand English all right."

Augustus stared. He felt a little disappointed. Eyeing Lone Eagle suspiciously, he said, "Say, are you a sure-nuff Indian?"

"Sure," said Lone Eagle. "Didn't you see me spear



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that fish? None of the white boys around here can do that."

"Huh," said Augustus, "I betcha I could."

Augustus had never tried spearing a fish, but he thought that fishing was one thing he knew all about. Pop had always been a fisherman, and as far back as Augustus could remember he had helped Pop with his lines and nets.

Lone Eagle looked doubtful.

"Here," said Augustus, "I'll show you." He picked up the spear.

Lone Eagle's black eyes gleamed as he quietly sat beside the pool and waited for a fish to appear.

Augustus balanced the spear in his hands. Minutes dragged by. Augustus watched the water. Finally, in the swirl of the churning greenish white froth at the edge of the falls, a long dark shadow moved.

"Ugh," grunted Lone Eagle as Augustus raised his arm to throw the spear. Even as his muscles tensed in the act of throwing, Augustus heard Lone Eagle's "Ugh," and was glad.

"Guess he's a sure-'nuff Indian after all," he thought. Then the spear was shooting out toward the fish and Augustus leaned out with it to get all the force he could behind the thrust. He got so much force that the spear sank its full length in the unresisting water, and Augustus followed right after it. His final push had been so strong that his body flew straight out after the spear and entered the water in a beautiful, if unexpected, dive.



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Then several things happened all at once. Augustus tightened his grasp on the spear, hanging on grimly as the swirling current swung him back and forth. Then he felt the battering weight of the falls on his head and back.

He was lifted up by foaming, tossing water only to meet the plunging weight of the falls which pushed him down again and rolled him end over end. Everything seemed unreal. Sometimes he was choking and sputtering in a strange mixture of air and spray. Then he felt the pressure of deep water and this gave way to a tossing and rocking in what seemed to be a great sea of roaring sound.

Then the battering pressure lessened and a gleam of bright light cut through the darkness.

"Foo," sputtered Augustus and opened his eyes. His head was out of water.

Looking around, he saw that he had passed through the waterfall and was now tossing in the rapids below. Several times his feet scraped along the bottom, but the force of the current swept him along.

A black shape stretched halfway across the stream below him. It was a fallen tree. Augustus grabbed and caught it. The water boiled around him as he worked his way along the tree trunk to shore. Then he was on his feet, scrambling over slippery rocks and reaching for the bank.

He suddenly realized that he was still holding the handle of the spear and that it was wobbling in the water



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and holding him back. As he glanced down at the spear, he suddenly grunted in surprise, and grinned.

He turned to the bank where Lone Eagle, sliding down over the rocks to the water's edge, stretched out his hand to help him ashore.

Augustus waded through the shallow water until he was directly in front of Lone Eagle. Then he heaved on the spear handle. Lifting it out of the water, he uncovered a flopping fish stuck fast on the prongs.

"Well," said Augustus, throwing the fish ashore with an air of great carelessness. "Well—I guess I showed you!"

Lone Eagle's black eyes were wide and popping with amazement.

"But you missed that fish in the pool—I saw you," he exclaimed.

"Oh, sure," said Augustus. "That's why I jumped in. I saw another fish—this one—and I had to jump after him to get him."

Lone Eagle gasped. His mouth opened and closed several times.

Finally he grinned and said, "Well, Indians tell some good fish stories, but I never heard one as good as that."

Augustus pretended he didn't hear that, and they scrambled up the bank. Lone Eagle made a fire and Augustus stretched out beside it to dry his overalls.

"I know what," said Augustus after a while. "Let's cook my fish."



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Lone Eagle was already rising to his feet and had his knife open to clean the fish.

Watching him, Augustus was reminded of the easy springy movements of a cat. Augustus was not usually awkward himself but he felt slow and stiff-jointed when he watched Lone Eagle. The bushes seemed to part ahead of the young Indian as he went down to the brook bank and scooped up a handful of mud.

Augustus blinked. What, he wondered, did mud have to do with cooking a fish? Watching closely, he grunted in surprise. Lone Eagle was plastering the mud thickly all over the newly cleaned fish.

"Hey!" yelled Augustus. "Hey, that's mud!"

Lone Eagle looked up in amazement at this rather pointless observation.

"Mud?" said Lone Eagle. "No—it's clay."

He went on plastering wet clay on the fish until it was a shapeless dripping mass. This he popped into the fire, raking the coals up into a glowing mound all around it.

Then, grinning at Augustus, he asked, "Haven't you ever cooked a fish this way?"

Augustus shook his head, wondering if this was all some strange sort of Indian joke.

"Mmm," said Lone Eagle, "I thought everybody knew about that."

Augustus stuck his lower lip out defiantly and said, "Huh, I betcha I could show you some things you never knew about, too."

That sounded a little peevish, even to Augustus, so he



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went on in a less sulky tone. "Anyway, I don't know much about Indians, except their scalping and burning prisoners and going on the warpath and things like that."

Lone Eagle looked a little startled at Augustus' idea of what made up life for a modern Indian. However, he sensed Augustus' admiration for the warriors who had lived like that. Lone Eagle himself was proud of the brave traditions of his race.

He said, "Well, we don't do so much scalping lately," but his manner suggested that even if things were a little peaceful at the moment, there might be a change for the better at any time.

"Say," he went on, "why don't you come on home with me? We can talk to the old men. Some of them did all those things."

"Oh boy!" said Augustus. "Sure." Then his face fell as he noticed that the sun was now overhead.

"Aw," he said, "it's dinnertime. They'll be wondering where I am."

"Hm," said Lone Eagle. "Well, come on over tomorrow, then."

They agreed to meet at the waterfall in the morning.

"Hey, wait," said Lone Eagle. "The fish!" He prodded in the ashes and dragged out a blackened, dirty-looking hard cinder.

Augustus looked at it and his mouth formed a blank-looking O.

"Is—is that it?" he asked finally.



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"Yeh, sure," said Lone Eagle enthusiastically.

He put the ugly thing on a rock, tapped it sharply with another rock, and the dirty black cinder split and fell apart, revealing the white and steaming flesh of a perfectly cooked fish. The skin and scales had stuck to the clay and the meat was clean, firm and juicy.

"Well, doggone!" said Augustus.

Grinning broadly, he and Lone Eagle ate and licked their lips. Still waving pieces of backbone, they parted, shouting, "See you tomorrow."



The Fifth Friend

by Jim Kjelgaard

A STORM was gathering over the valley of the Big Horn. The black clouds that rolled up in the sky nudged and shoved one another as each sought for a place of precedence, and all mingled in a great, threatening mass of thunderheads. A streak of lightning flashed like a crooked sword blade beneath them, and a rolling peal of thunder rumbled through the sky. A herd of buffalo outside Fort Raymond began to mill about, snuffling uneasily, and formed a circle with their heads pointing toward its center. The two men who were riding brown and white Indian ponies over the plain spurred their mounts, and the little horses broke into a mile-eating gallop. The buffalo separated to let them run through, and a few seconds later the rain fell.

It came down in great, misty sheets, hurling itself at the short prairie grass as though it were an enemy upon which the rain had to pour down its pent-up vengeance



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once and for all. Depressions and buffalo wallows filled with a sluggish, roily flood. One of the horses slipped and almost went down, but the superb horsemanship of its rider averted catastrophe. Looking sullenly back over its shoulder, a drenched coyote slunk from beneath the bit of brush where it had found partial shelter. The coyote crouched low to the earth, waiting until the horsemen had gone by. Then it crept back to the brush and began to smooth its wet fur.

Side by side, the horsemen rode into Fort Raymond and pulled sharply on the single reins that ended in a loop through their mounts' jaws. As they dismounted, they drew their rifles from the buffalo-skin scabbards that covered them and examined the priming. As indifferent to their own soaked condition as they were careful of their powder's, they rein-haltered their horses, and strode toward a long, squat building whose door was surmounted by a bleached buffalo skull and horns of enormous size. Flinging open the door, they brushed past the clerk at the counter, and disappeared into a room at the rear.

The little clerk eyed the retreating backs and the wet trail of moccasin tracks with frank disapproval. He had come out to this God-forsaken Fort Raymond from a good position in St. Louis, only because Manuel Lisa had offered him four times the wages he had been earning there. But he did not have to like either the place or the people living in it. St. Louis had been civilized, at least, although in the five years since the Louisiana



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Purchase there had been more and more of these wild trappers fighting and carousing in its streets.

But at this desolate juncture of the Big Horn and the Yellowstone, where Manuel Lisa had built his trading post, there was *nothing* but trappers and Indians and buffalo. And the two men who had gone in to see Lisa were the wildest of them all—little better than savages. The clerk sniffed. Perhaps it was true that these men had accompanied Lewis and Clark on the expedition people said had crossed the mountains to the Pacific. Almost anything could be expected of men who seemed to prefer the wilderness to civilization.

For himself, he wanted no part of it. When he had saved enough to go back to St. Louis, ruffians like John Colter and John Potts could have this wild, barren land, for all of him.

The clerk resumed his entries in the big ledger, and when they were finished, he ran his goose quill down the double column of figures. Seventy bales of beaver pelts had been brought in, as had a variety of fox, deer, bear, wolf, and sable skins. Trade goods had gone out to pay for them, and the books must balance exactly. Manuel Lisa, the trading prince of this western fur empire, had as keen an eye for trade goods as he had for sighting his long rifle. A half-pound of blue beads, over or under what should be, would not escape detection. The clerk triple-checked his entries, sighed, and with the ledger under his arm walked to the small door at the rear which had been so unceremoniously opened by



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Colter and Potts. He knocked, then waited until a soft, Latin-accented voice spoke.

"Come een."

The clerk entered, and with an outward show of respect stood silently waiting, while he looked at the three men in the office. Manuel Lisa, his Spanish employer, sat behind a heavy desk, his dark face an impassive setting for bright, businesslike eyes. The other two men had about them a certain cramped look, as though the small office was an uncomfortable and unfamiliar place. Their long rifles leaned against the wall, their knives and tomahawks lay on the desk. Their soft buckskin clothing, still damp, outlined lean, hard figures.

"The accounts of the shipment for St. Louis are ready, sir," said the clerk.

Manuel Lisa swung around and extended his hand for the ledger. The clerk gave it to him, and Lisa ran his eye down the columns of figures. Without speaking, he handed the ledger back. The clerk stood irresolutely, and flushed when he caught John Potts' amused eye. Lisa said, "That ees all," and the clerk gladly left the room.

John Potts jerked his thumb at the closing door. "He'd make a good pet for a Blackfoot squaw, Manuel."

Manuel Lisa shrugged, and his lips parted in a white-toothed smile. "Were there none to keep track of the furs you wild men bring in," he said, "trading would be an es-sorry tangle. What? So my leetle pet ees necessary."



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"There's all kinds of buffalo in a herd, I reckon," said the other man in buckskin.

Lisa swung to face him. "Now then, my frien', tell me more."

"It's simple enough," replied John Colter. "We're aimin' to go up the Yellowstone to where it makes the big bend to the south. Then we'll hit overland to the three forks of the Missouri—I got a couple of canoes hid there. There's a million little cricks in that country around the Jefferson, and none but what's got its beaver lodges. It's Blackfoot country, but the Flatheads and Crows is already tradin' into here from when you sent me out last summer. Mebbe we can open this country, too. That's all."

"That ees all, eh?" said the Latin trader. "Do you forget that you'll be three hundred miles from the nearest white man and the help he can give you?"

Colter shrugged. "If there was white men there wouldn't be fur. And we don't need help."

"That may be so." Manuel Lisa's eyes sought the floor. "But the las' time you went out you joined the Crows in a fight against the Blackfeet. Blackfeet do not forget, my frien'."

"We'll travel at night."

"And run your traps, and do your cooking and hunting at night?"

"Sure. Why not?"

"Well, eef you want to be crazee—" Lisa shook his head hopelessly.



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"Then we can draw on you for the stores we need?"

"That was never the question," the trader said with quiet dignity. "Eef you wanted to set traps for El Diablo himself, you could draw on my stores. You come back, you pay me. You don' come back . . ." He spread his hands expressively. ". . . Manuel Lisa don' lose so much as you. But the point ees—we want trade, not war. I do not trust thees Blackfeet. But you find a really good fur country and we build a fort in it, eh?"

"We'll look around some," promised John Colter. He rose, thrust his knife and tomahawk into his belt, and held out his hand. "So long, Manuel. Be seein' you."

"Adios, my frien'. Don' eat any Blackfeet."

"Jest a couple of small ones," grinned Potts. He picked up his rifle and walked out of the room, pausing to grip the trader's hand as he went by.

Manuel Lisa walked with them to the door. A smile was on his lips, but at the same time a sadness lingered in his eyes. He had seen many go out thus, and a great many had never returned. But it was men like these who would make his dream possible. As he looked out over the rolling prairie to where the Big Horn curved to meet the Yellowstone, his mind's eye could see that watery highway carrying his flatboats and keelboats, loaded with furs, on past the Milk, the Cheyenne, the Platte, on and on, fifteen hundred miles to St. Louis, the heart of the new American trading empire.

This was 1808, only two years after Lewis and Clark had brought back word of this region, and he Manuel



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Lisa, already had a trading post in operation. In another two years . . .

John Colter stood for a moment beside the river, looking back at Fort Raymond and mentally checking their preparations. Unconsciously, his hand strayed to his belt to check the knife and tomahawk hanging there. A man had five good friends when he went into the wilderness beyond the point where other men ventured, and three of them were his rifle, knife, and tomahawk. The fourth was whoever travelled with him. But the fifth, and the one upon which he could depend to the greatest possible extent, was himself. A man might lose his rifle, axe, and knife. There might be no one willing or able to stand by his side just when he most needed someone there. But no matter what happened, or what desperate extremities he might encounter, ultimate reliance would have to be on that fifth friend.

Potts was stowing their beaver traps in the canoe, being careful that they laid on a bed roll so that their sharp corners and protruding edges would not puncture the fragile bark covering. John Colter steadied the craft, and cast an expert eye over the various goods within it. But they were arranged all right. Potts was a good man in a canoe, and as much at home in the wilderness as Colter himself. But he was also possessed of a quality that would be anything but an asset should the wrong set of circumstances arise. He had a fiery temper that was aroused to fever pitch for the slightest reason. Only three



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days before he had nearly killed another trapper in a knife fight that had been stopped only by Manuel Lisa's interference.

But this trip did not promise anything unusual, and there should be no reason for Potts to become aroused. They were going only a few hundred miles, and that was a mere excursion. Of course there were Blackfeet there. Colter grinned faintly, remembering Lisa's fears that the Blackfeet were ready to kill any white man who ventured into their country. True, there seldom was a time when the Blackfeet weren't at war, and Blackfoot country was any place at all where they had a war party consisting of as many as four men—though of course the tribe did have its regular hunting grounds and villages.

Potts straightened up and squinted his eyes at the sun. "Time's a-wastin'."

"Yup."

Potts stepped into the canoe, settled himself in the bow, and picked up a paddle. John Colter took his place in the stern, and they dug their paddles deeply in unison. The little craft shot smoothly into the sluggish current and turned upstream. They had turned their backs on civilization.

They paddled steadily up the Yellowstone, hour after hour, through country as open as the palms of their hands. From time to time flocks of ducks took to the wing at their approach, and a diving muskrat or jumping fish would occasionally ripple the water ahead of



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them. Once the body of a big pike, white belly up, floated by, and they could see the huge gashes torn in its side by some rapacious bird that had been unable to lift its victim. But they saw no sign of men, red or white, although they kept a sharp watch on the treeless banks between which they were passing. Not that they could tell too much by looking at the banks, or noting the actions of the animals along them. Animals might act any way at all, and the fact that they were peacefully grazing or resting did not necessarily indicate that there were no Indians about. An Indian could crawl right in among a herd of buffalo before they even knew he was around, and antelope might start at anything at all. They were flighty beasts.

But even Indians were not infallible, and to keen eyes they were bound to leave some sign of their passing wherever they went. A buckskin thong, a broken paddle, or almost anything on the river that did not belong there would be ample evidence that Indians were upstream. They were past masters at hiding their tracks, but hiding tracks was a real job, even for Blackfeet, and they seldom bothered to do it unless they knew enemies were around. And it was just as well to see Blackfeet before they saw you, if you valued your scalp.

Toward late afternoon John Colter said, "Do you reckon it would be all right to build a fire tonight?"

"Reckon it would," his companion answered. "We ain't seen a thing all day."

"It won't be all right tomorrow night. And mebbe



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we'd best be careful how and where we shoot after this. But we could cook a passel of buffalo meat tonight, and eat it until we get out on the cricks."

"Pshaw!" Potts scoffed. "You're scarin' yourself jest thinkin' of them Blackfeet!"

"I've fought agin the Blackfeet," John Colter said soberly, "and I ain't scared of 'em. But neither are they scared of me. It's best to take no chances."

"Think they'll be any Blackfeet along these cricks of yourn?"

"There's no tellin' where they'll be. I even saw signs of 'em around the lake this river rises in—a hundred miles south of the big bend."

Potts snorted. "You mean the lake where you said the water shoots up outa holes? I suppose the Blackfeet was takin' baths in them boilin' springs you told about!"

"I've been there," Colter replied calmly, "and you ain't. What's more, those hot springs soaked the soreness out of the leg wound I got in that fight between the Crows and the Blackfeet, and it's as good as it ever was."

Potts grunted incredulously. "Did the Blackfeet have guns in that fight?"

"Jest a few. There ain't been any tradin' with 'em so far, and they've jest picked up a few from the Flatheads and Crows. But they sure know how to shoot them bows and arrers."

"They won't shoot far's a gun."

"They kill jest as dead."

A half hour before sunset they swung in to the bank,



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and landed in the shelter of some low-hanging willows. Potts stayed with the canoe, gathering dry sticks for a fire, while his companion stalked cautiously up the bank. He halted just within the screening willows and looked all about. Nothing showed except a half dozen antelope and a herd of stolid buffalo that were bedding down for the night near a clump of cottonwoods. Colter slunk back into the willows and threaded his way upstream through them. When he emerged he was within a hundred feet of the buffalo herd. Taking aim at a fat cow, he squeezed the trigger and watched her thump heavily to the ground. The rest milled curiously about, but raised their tails and stamped stiff-leggedly away when the hunter approached.

He cut the succulent hump from the cow's back, and left the rest for the wolves and coyotes.

Fourteen days out of Fort Raymond they came into the maze of little creeks that formed the headwaters of the Missouri. After careful exploration Colter found the nameless, deep little stream where he had concealed a canoe on his previous trip with the Crows. The canoe was intact, and apparently undisturbed. It was no wonder, for the country was a dense labyrinth. Low hills that supported a thick growth of aspens hemmed in the stream, and feeding into it, within easy trapping distance, were a dozen or more smaller creeks, all of which were choked with beaver dams. The region was a trapper's paradise, but a nightmare for anyone trying to cross



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it in a hurry. The only practicable route was down the little stream, which pursued a long course before it emptied into the Jefferson, one of the three forks of the Missouri. Farther downstream, the hills were mere scantily forested knolls that were covered with prickly pear, and gave way in many places to open level stretches.

To the west and north the hills were higher, and the winds that blew from them down into the valleys carried tidings of the cold weather that would soon come to lock this region in winter's grip. But they should get out, with a good load of pelts, before freeze-up. They could divide whatever their catch brought in, pay Manuel Lisa back, and have a tidy sum left over. Then they could go trapping again; there was a lot of the western country that they had never seen, and the first-comer got the best pelts, as they knew from experience.

Although they had neither seen nor heard any Indians, they had travelled by night since leaving the Yellowstone to make the last, overland leg of their journey. By the light of a waning moon they had found Colter's cached canoe, and were now surveying the neighborhood before launching it. Pale moonlight, slanting down into the valley, struck the face of a stone ledge, exposed and vertically split by some mighty upheaval of past ages. A small evergreen grew directly in front of the three-foot crevice, and John Colter parted its branches to reveal a spacious cavern that extended back into the heart of the rock. He spoke softly.

"A Crow showed it to me the last time we were here.



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He says the Blackfeet don't know about it. What do you think about keepin' our plunder here?"

"Looks like a bad place to be caught in," Potts said doubtfully. "I'd rather sleep back in the brush, myself."

"So would I. And we'll have to keep the canoe out, too. But we can stow our grub in here, and our pelts."

They carried the blocks of pemmican, and the flour and salt, to which Manuel Lisa had staked them, into the cavern. And, with each trip they made, they carefully crawled under the branches of the little evergreen, so that no breaks or marks would show. Prowling Indians needed no more than a broken twig to tell them that enemies or strangers were near. But, after they had cached their food, no eye could have told that anything foreign was in the cave. Lastly, with a dead branch they brushed over the path they had made.

"Now let's go set a few traps," Potts said impatiently. "Them beaver ought to be thick enough to walk on."

"Good idea."

They launched the canoe, and paddled downstream to where a trickling little rill emptied its waters into the stream. Twenty feet back from its mouth, the streamlet pitched over a beaver dam that stretched across it. While Potts handled the canoe, Colter waded ashore, three of their twelve traps in his hand. He set one at the foot of the little path made by beaver coming down the side of the dam, and two at freshly worn trails near the edge of the water. Going on down the stream, they spotted the rest of their traps in three other little rills



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that dribbled into it. Beaver did not seek big water. Even if it was only a foot-wide trickle, so long as it was suitable for a dam and there was food about, beaver would live in it.

As they paddled away from their last set, they saw the dark shape of a swimming beaver, and the curling V-line it left as it started for the safety of a burrow under the bank.

"Bank beaver!" Potts jeered. "All these dams around, but he has to be different! He has to live in a bank!"

"Beaver do what they dang please," John Colter observed quietly. "Looks like our traps will be full afore mornin'. But keep your voice down!"

"Aw, there ain't any Blackfeet around here. What are you so nervous about?"

"I'm aimin' to keep my hair a spell longer," replied Colter, "and there's only one way to be sure of doin' it. Let's go. We ain't finished yet."

He put the canoe in toward a thick clump of young willows, and Potts waded ashore to make his way to the center of the thicket. He cut a dozen long, lithe shoots, trimmed the twigs from them, and carefully shoved all the cut wood under the roots of another willow. With no Indians about, it seemed a senseless precaution, but he knew that Colter would insist that nothing at all should appear out of place. He returned to the canoe with the trimmed shoots, and they started back upstream, toward their traps.

The moon was low, but dawn would soon be sending



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its stealthy light creeping down the little, shadowed valleys. A deer on the bank of the stream snorted, and plunged into the underbrush. A bull elk, surprised at its morning drink, lifted its head to stare, and stamped its forefoot threateningly. Out in the forest an awakening flicker rattled a sleepy song.

They stopped at the first dam, and took two big beaver out of the traps they had set there. Passing between high, rock-studded banks, they came to the next dam, and found two more. By the time they got back to the cavern there were seven beaver in the canoe.

Potts skinned them, cutting them up the belly and peeling the skins off over legs and tail. Then he bent the lithe willows so that their ends met and formed a circle. Piercing the edges of the beaver pelts with his knife, he laced them to the willow hoops and put them in the cave. They would be dry within a few days. Then they could be taken off the stretching hoops and baled.

Meantime Colter had been building a cairn of rocks in the shallow water at the edge of the stream. As soon as it extended above the surface of the water he built a fire on it and roasted the fattest beavers' hind quarters. They ate, chewing the stringy flesh with all the gusto of hungry men, and then carried the rest of the beaver carcasses five hundred feet back into the sheltering trees, where they would be nothing but picked bones in a few hours. They lifted the canoe out of the water, carried it into the forest, and cached it where it had been hidden before. Lifting the rocks on which they had built



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their fire, they dropped them back into the creek, smoked side down. Separating, careful to leave no tracks, they went into the woods and slept all day.

That night they went down to the stream again and set traps in the tributary creeks just below the ones they had worked the night before. Night after night they followed the same procedure, trapping down the stream until they began to work into more open country. The pile of pelts in the cavern grew steadily higher.

One morning the first gray streaks of dawn were again appearing in the sky when they started back upstream. A light mist was rising from the water, curling its tenuous fingers toward the tops of the trees. Out in the forest a great horned owl sent its fierce hunting cry rolling over the still reaches. Far away a gray wolf howled. The whistling snort of a buck sounded from the bank. A fox yelped, and then yelped again.

Suddenly John Colter tensed. From somewhere upstream had come a faint sound that did not blend in. Silently rocking the canoe in warning, he dug his paddle deeply into the water and with a dozen powerful strokes sent the canoe shooting from between high banks that might conceal an enemy into a stretch where they could see better.

The east bank was covered by a horde of blanketed Blackfeet!

Before they could turn, more Indians appeared behind them, with drawn bows. There was no escape. Colter saw an eagle-feathered warrior motioning for them to



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land, and put in to the bank. As he stepped out of the canoe, he heard a bowstring twang, and looked around to see an arrow slither through the loose part of Potts' shirt.

"Don't shoot!" he cried warningly.

But Potts' face was livid with rage. He raised his rifle, took point-blank aim at the brave who had loosed the arrow, and fired. Almost before the Indian fell, fifty bowstrings snapped, fifty arrows hissed through the air.

The canoe drifted slowly down the stream, its dead occupant pierced by so many arrows that he was almost hidden by the feathered ends.

The Indians watched it go, standing ominously quiet until the drifting canoe had passed between the high banks and out of sight. Then, at a guttural command from the warrior who wore the eagle feathers, evidently a chief, there was movement among the Indians downstream. Colter guessed that orders had been given to bring in Potts' scalp and the two rifles in the canoe. At the same time, his own knife and tomahawk were plucked from his belt and thrown on the ground.

Knowing that any sudden move would mean instant death, he stood silently, without expression, while his thoughts worked for him. He was surrounded by a horde of Blackfeet, who had only hatred of white men written on their scowling faces. He had lost his rifle, tomahawk, and knife, and the friend who would have stood beside him. But in the last resort and desperate extremity he al-





Potts' face was livid with rage



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ways had himself. A man could never abandon himself until death stole in to take all.

A young, hawk-nosed warrior came up to stand before the white man, and to spit squarely in his face. A brave with a swinging tomahawk slashed it viciously down, and the flat of the blade brushed John Colter's nose. He took half a step backward, and immediately felt the keen point of a knife bite through his clothing into his back. He stood still and studied the Indian who had spit at him. A man could not rightly call himself dead until he *was* dead, and if by some miracle he escaped from this, there was a young Blackfoot he wanted to remember. Some time he might see him over the sights of a rifle. He didn't have Potts' fiery temper, but he had a long memory.

A battle-scarred veteran who had been standing beside the dead Blackfoot stooped and picked up Colter's knife from the ground. His lips were a tight line across his face, and venom glowed in his eyes as, with slow and purposeful tread, he approached the captive. He raised the knife, but almost instantly another warrior struck it down. They began to quarrel back and forth, and John Colter's tongue licked out over dry lips. Half a dozen more warriors joined the argument, their voices heavy with anger.

The white man looked once more at the little stream, down which the canoe had carried Potts' body. Potts, the ready fighter! If all the Indians west of the Mississippi gathered together, and one shot an arrow at him,



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Potts would have to shoot back. But it had not been good sense. Had he submitted, and let himself be taken prisoner, they might have gained a little time, or even have talked the Blackfeet into a friendly attitude. But now there was no chance. The braves were arguing as to who should have the privilege of first striking down the victim. Three more warriors joined the argument.

A coyote slunk through the brush behind them, and crouched very low to the earth while he fixed his eyes on the scene ahead. The coyote licked his chops, and waited patiently. He had followed war parties of the Blackfeet before, and seen them take prisoners. There was always much for him to feast on when the warriors finally departed.

The chief with the eagle feathers strode to the center of the quarreling group and let his blanket fall about his hips. He pointed to the east, and spoke firmly and rapidly. A delighted chuckle rose from the rest, and spread to the outer circle as the word was passed on.

John Colter folded his arms across his chest and stood very still. The Blackfeet were past masters at hatching up hellish schemes, and no doubt were now in the process of evolving another one. He would know in time, and if they were planning to take him anywhere, which he doubted, there was always the hope of escape.

The chief stopped talking, and a slim warrior with a long, ragged scar across his chest began to guffaw, until he was so overcome by his own merriment that he rolled helplessly on the ground. A brave with a steel-tipped



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lance in his hand, and a red blanket over his shoulders, walked in front of the victim. He let the blanket drop to the ground, pointed with obvious pride to his long, well-muscled legs, then gestured at Colter with his spear. Two of the Blackfeet closed in from either side, and threw the white man to the ground. He was aware of the point of the ripping knife that sliced away his clothing, and felt the knife slide into the side of his foot when the Indians cut off his moccasins.

When they let him up he was naked, and the morning wind from the little stream cut icily about him. As though it had been prearranged, those Indians standing in front of him drew back to form an open lane. The captive looked that way, across the prickly-pear flats, toward the Jefferson, five or six miles away.

The chief came to his side. He pointed across the flats, then at Colter's legs, and grunted inquiringly.

Now, at last, the victim understood, and the tip of his tongue scraped against the dry roof of his mouth. The warriors could not agree as to who was to have the honor of killing him, so the chief had decided for them. He was to be turned loose, naked and weaponless, and the first brave to run him down could claim him as a rightful quarry. He thought fast.

The chief was still pointing at his legs. Colter shook his head, showed the cut in his naked foot, and indicated the angry red welt on his leg that marked the arrow-wound he had received from the Blackfeet the year before. He put his weight on that leg, and let it



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buckle slightly. Actually, there was nothing wrong with his leg, and he could outrun any white man west of St. Louis. But a little false confidence on the part of the Blackfeet might give him a chance.

An impatient, bloodthirsty murmur came from the waiting Indians. The chief grunted again, and pushed Colter toward the open lane. He walked slowly forward, carefully limping a little, trying to breathe softly and deeply, to pull as much air as possible into his lungs. He kept his eyes straight ahead, his ears alert for the first sounds of beginning pursuit.

No doubt the savage who killed him would go back to whatever lousy lodge he had come from, there to render a suitably embellished story of the white man who had tried to escape him. Probably the feat would be inscribed in paint on the sides of the tepee, blessed by the medicine man, and the victor from that time on would be known by some name that would forever call to mind his remarkable run. Well, if they'd give him a start, the brave who caught him would have something to boast of.

The autumn wind played coldly across his naked body as he walked through the lane and out toward the flats. He did not look back, and only slightly increased his pace. This was a game, all the rules of which were made by the more powerful players. But anyone in any game had at least a chance of winning.

He did not begin to run until he heard the war cry burst from a hundred throats. Then he drew a tremen-



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dous breath, and leaped into action. Even so, he ran easily, saving his strength, trying to pay no attention to the sharp prickly-pear thorns that entered his feet. He would challenge any Indian to any race if he were wearing moccasins. But he was not wearing moccasins, or anything else, and blood was spurting from his cut foot.

He sped over a little hillock and down the other side, and when he passed a wide-trunked cottonwood he dodged behind it so that it was between himself and his pursuers. He was running well. He knew that. But he had to run well, because death was the penalty for doing otherwise. With that certain knowledge he knew also that he could not permit one split second of hesitation or panic. He still did not look back, because there was no use in looking back. A man could, for a flicker of time, feel the slash of the arrow or the thrust of the lance that cut into his back, but there was no point in looking around to see if it was coming. He had been given his chance, the only one he could hope for, and every desperate faculty must be devoted to making the most of it.

A medley of disappointed yells came to him as the slower and more easily outdistanced of the Blackfeet dropped behind, where all they could do was watch the finish of the race. But as the panting minutes went past, a sense of utter futility and helplessness overcame him. It seemed that his straining lungs could not admit another breath of air, his pounding heart must burst. Blood was flowing from his nose and he could taste it in his mouth. Every step on his bleeding, thorn-filled feet was agony.



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Despairingly, he turned his head for one fleeting glimpse over his shoulder.

Still racing on his trail, a dozen of the Blackfeet stretched for half a mile behind him. Far behind them the rest of the tribe were trotting slowly along, without hope of the kill but wishing to be in on it. There was only one very close pursuer. Twenty yards behind, the Indian with the long slim legs, who had dropped his blanket but was holding his spear ready, pounded desperately in pursuit. The brave increased his speed, closing the gap to fifteen yards. It was about over. When the Blackfoot thought to throw away his spear, he could close the distance.

Colter stopped suddenly, whirling in his tracks and throwing out both hands. It was a ruse, a last, desperate gamble tried more through instinct than reason. But it worked. The Indian tried to stop and dodge, involuntarily reacting to the impulse that bade him watch out for the weapon that might be cast by this unarmed, naked white man. He stumbled, tripped on his spear, and fell jerkily to the earth. The spear's wooden handle splintered.

The white man raced toward the fallen brave, snatched up the broken lance, jabbed it into his pursuer, pulled it out, and turned to run on.

He had counted on distraction here, and he received it. The following warriors paused for an instant by the side of their wounded comrade, and when they resumed the race, Colter was only a few hundred yards from the



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Jefferson River. Before they could close with him, he had reached the bank.

Ahead of him was a small island, whose upper end had caught and held a tangled debris of floating tree trunks, branches, and weeds. Drawing one last agonizing breath, he dove into the icy water, and came up beneath the tumbled mass of driftwood. He clawed his way up through the center of the wood until he could breathe again, and waited.

Stark naked, carrying the broken half of spear, John Colter walked into Fort Raymond eight days later. He paused by the staring clerk, and gravely dropped the broken spear across the ledger. "Souvenir, Junior," he said, and walked on into Lisa's office.

"Hello, Manuel," he croaked. He dropped into the same chair he had occupied the day they had planned the ill-fated expedition.

Manuel Lisa's questioning black eyes gave the only evidence of his astonishment. He went to a cupboard and poured out a stiff drink of brandy. Colter sipped it slowly, feeling warmth flow back into his numb, stiff body.

"You guessed it, Manuel," he said. "The Blackfeet caught us. Potts is dead, and all I got left is what you see." He finished the brandy. "But there's lots of beaver on those little cricks—more'n I thought."

"So-o? And what would you suggest, my frien'?"

"That I go back," John Colter replied shortly.



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"There's a pile of pelts cached up there, and plenty more to be took. But we need a fort, I reckon." Then, as though it were an afterthought, he added, "Some of them Blackfeet are a mite unfriendly."



A Brush with the Enemy

by Wilfrid S. Bronson

WHOA!" Not sixty yards away, three dark, bearded men in armor reined in their mounts and tilted forward in their saddles, scrutinizing the Indian boys intently. A medley of utterly unfamiliar smells breezed through the boys' brains, from sweating horse and moist tanned leather, to white man's scent, plus a Spaniard's hair oil in a hot steel hat, all scrambled in a startling mixture with the sight these fierce fantastic men on mighty beasts presented.

Captain Vittorio Umbría spoke to one of his aides, but because his gaze never left the Seri boys, they thought he was addressing them, and stood still for a fleeting moment.

"Hand me your crossbow, sergeant! I'll show you some sport. 'Tis said these desert devils are as hard to hit as deer!" Not till he aimed it at them did the boys recognize its danger. They ducked behind a maguey clump as the crossbow twanged. A loud laugh from the aides, a



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stifled snarl from Stooping Hawk. The short, heavy quarrel skinned his shoulder and stuck in a maguey stalk. Stranded Whale, rousing to anger, nocked an arrow of his own as the captain cried, "Circle, you two. And drive the beggars out! I'll try again!" He swung his horse broadside to be ready for the instant when the boys must dash from cover. Stranded Whale tried a lightning shot over the maguey and dodged back as the captain sent one after him. It came right into the clump and stopped just short of Stooping Hawk as an outraged scream broke from the captain's horse. Stranded Whale's over-quick shot, missing the captain, had struck his horse in its unarmored rump, a non-fatal but most enraging stab which sent the steed to bucking furiously.

The two aides were nearly convulsed, choking back their laughter at Captain Umbría's loss of dignity, and in that moment he lost the boys too. They saw their chance and zig-zagged off through the brush like the deer they had been likened to, with just one pause to shoot at least six arrows at the Spanish captain. One splintered on his breastplate, one whizzed close by his ear, and a third (this time one of Stooping Hawk's) stung the horse again just as he was getting it under control. Away it carried its raging rider in a second series of jarring, jolting arcs, and away went two somewhat satisfied but still very angry Indians.

Once on the rise of rubble where the range rose from the plain, they stopped and took a long look back. There, a mile away, were the three mounted men, now joined



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by a large cavalry troop—like those in the mirage—which had just caught up with them, and perhaps a dozen Indians on foot. Together these went into the thicket by the stream, coming out on the other side. The boys watched them for a moment more then turned their attention to the two Spanish arrows which Stooping Hawk had brought away. Testily they touched the four-faced blunt steel heads of the crossbow quarrels, heads fashioned to batter through armor rather than to pierce, as stunning in their impact as a dum dum bullet. They sniffed at the short thick shanks and feathers where the captain's hand had been, memorizing a new, already hateful odor, the smell of a white man's salty sweat.

"Had our hunting arrows points like these, we might have finished that ugly one who tried to finish us!" said Stooping Hawk.

"Do you realize," answered Stranded Whale, "what manner of men these are, who laugh as they aim at your heart, seeking to stab you through as we might pierce a pitahaya fruit, for fun? Surely evil deeds go with hairy faces! It was not your shoulder but your heart he meant to scratch!"

"Now we shall *have* to quit our hunting. This must be told on Tiburon as soon as we can get there!" said Stooping Hawk. And they hurried back over the crumbling range.

It was near sundown when they reached the cave and shot themselves a musk-pig supper. They had a long, long drink and lay down on the several hides they had



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secured, but built no fire, knowing neither where nor when to expect the Spaniards now that they were really in the land. One could not tell what such unfamiliar enemies might do. With what evil spirits of the night might they not be in league?

As daylight dimmed in the cave, Stranded Whale grinned a little at his friend who was looking glumly at the hides, so much smaller a collection than they had planned on taking home.

"I believe you actually resent this ending of our hunt so soon, more than being used as target for the fun of bearded strangers," he said. "But I think that we were fortunate."

"Fortunate only as your own good shot changed fortune for a moment so that we could get away."

"Even so, I had not meant to hit the beast," said Stranded Whale. "And now I know a Kumkaak hunting arrow only shatters on the hard and shiny stuff these men wear. It was lucky that I hit the animal." He placed his hand upon the arm of his friend, who still looked gloomy. "And in another way we have had good luck indeed. They brought no thundersticks such as Loud Talk tells about. Had one of those been pointed at us instead of that odd bow, we'd not be here but back there lying on the plain, our spirits wandering."

"The things you say are very true. Your thoughts are better than my own." Stooping Hawk relaxed a little. "I will give you both the arrows of the ugly ones; of one I have had quite enough already." He felt his shoulder.



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"That first one you should keep as a trophy of the hunt in which you were the game," laughed Stranded Whale. "But I should like to have the other. What did you with your little ornament?" Stooping Hawk reached into his quiver. Yes, there it was where he had quickly tucked it when the white men first surprised them. Then he stretched out on his share of the green hides and they sank toward slumber, talking of the captain's bucking horse, an exciting exhibition which at the time had been forced from their attention by the threat of death.

"No other animal save a deer killing a rattlesnake jumps in that manner, coming down so hard," yawned Stooping Hawk.

"And with a heavy man upon his back. I doubt a deer could dance with such a weight," said Stranded Whale in drowsy tones.

"I wonder how an animal like that would taste," droned Stooping Hawk. There was only a light snore in reply, so he gave up wondering and slept. The yap and howl of a sociable coyote, singing in the center of the nearby squirrel town, bothered neither boy a bit. It was but a wild lullaby often heard at home on Tiburon.

When day first signaled its return, they splashed water on their faces and took a short drink. Then carrying the hides to the ground squirrel barren where the light was stronger, and tying them into compact bundles, they fastened them about their shoulders with strips of skin. With quivers also on their backs and bows in hand, they were ready to start for home. They faced the canyon



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through which the sun was soon to pour its rays, bowing their heads, hands touching medicine bags. Then, wheeling, they ran westward at the famous Seri spryfoot trot.

The light came rapidly and soon the sun touched the tops of their bobbing heads, slid down their weaving backs, and flashed on their swiftly lifting heels. It warmed the air and quickly dried the dew, bringing from the desert plants a fragrance sharp and pleasing to inhale. Lungs opened to the utmost, the breath of the runners synchronized with the strong beat of their hearts and the rhythm of their flying feet. Like perfectly timed machines they clocked off mile on mile, less taxed than stimulated by the pace.

But the sun grew very hot and, about mid-morning, dust spouts swirled up from the desert floor in a gusty and contrary breeze. The west wind pushed against them and flung sand and stinging alkali in their faces. Grit got between their teeth but not into their half-closed well protected eyes, and so they leaned the harder on the wind and traveled on. Dark clouds formed in the west, then faded out, and not long after a brief shower fell at a long angle from the clear blue sky.

They were back at the coast with some of the morning to spare, and walked about a bit before shoving off in the balsa, now very dry and buoyant from its several days in the mangroves. The wind, so helpful when they had crossed from Tiburon, was kicking up a frothy sea which rolled in powerful waves upon the great dunes on the mainland shore. Ordinarily, like other Seris, the boys



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would have camped right there awaiting more accommodating weather.

But theirs was no ordinary need to reach the island, so they soon set off across the bounding waters. Only one thing was in their favor, the fact that the wind was head on and not broadside. A south or north wind of such power would have kept them on the beach. In the backward racing sea it seemed as though the wind were trying to shove the balsa back down every wave that raised its bow. In spite of aching arms and shoulders they plied their paddles for hour after hour of agonizing effort. Supertime saw them stumbling up the beach amongst excited members of their band, refusing to answer questions till they had got their breath. This they made quite clear by signs, and the Widow White Bird quickly brought them water.

Old Broken Thumb, as medicine man, wanted to scarify their legs and arms "to let out the fatigue," but they declined this, being not that weary.

The gabble of the crowd stopped suddenly when Stooping Hawk, breathing easily once more, held up his hand and looked at Loud Talk.

"Loud Talk," said he, "Uncle, Stranded Whale and I would show you something." Each pulled forth a Spanish crossbow arrow. As the people all reached to feel their points, Loud Talk said,

"These are arrows of the pale and hairy faces. Have you been in the Opata country?"

"No, Loud Talk," put in Stranded Whale. "We would



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not have crossed the strait today against the will of the western wind if that were all. We have not been in the Opata country. But the pale and ugly people are in Kumkaak land!"

When the noise of the crowd had quieted down again, old Broken Thumb inquired, "Did you creep into their camp and do some artful taking? Or did you meet them face to face and receive these arrows from their hands? They are not gifts of peace, you know."

"Well do we know that, Grandfather! We met them face to face," said Stranded Whale. "Look at the cut upon my brother-friend's left shoulder! We received the arrows from their hands at the twang of a bow! A most peculiar bow, Grandfather."

"Uncle Broken Thumb," supplemented Loud Talk, "these people mount the bow upon a stick, holding it crosswise instead of up and down. Nephews, came they on their animals to which they give the name of 'horse'?" In answer to which the boys told in some detail of their encounter amidst exclamations of amazement. Then Broken Thumb, taking his cue from the crowd, decided that War Chief Snake Biter should know about this matter right away.

"I'll bear the news. I have not eaten yet!" cried Smoky Fire, a light and wiry ten-year-old already excellent in distance racing.

"Nor I!" cried several others. "Who shall carry the word, Grandfather?"

"All go. It may be dark before you get there even



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though the beach is easy running. So carry torches and a cane of fire. If Chief Snake Biter calls a council we shall see you at the central camp tomorrow!" Someone brought a section of bamboo plugged at the ends, a number of red hot coals within. From this a quick fire could be made for lighting torches should darkness fall before they reached Snake Biter's camp. Five runners set off briskly, assured of at least some moments of importance as they spread the news from band to band, and of a generous meal and sleeping room in friendly huts at the central camp.

About two hours after dark a great light suddenly appeared on top of the big mountain behind the central camp. It showed that Snake Biter had heard the news and called for a grand council of the tribe the very next day. All up and down the island shores, Seri bands observed the light for fifteen miles to north and south. Those to the south knew something of the reasons for the call, but those north of the central camp could only speculate. But in every band each huthold was the scene of lively talk until sleep put an end to the excitement.

As for the two young Indians who had brought home Spanish arrows, though no one showed much interest in the skins they had obtained, their brush with the pale and hairy faces had created a greater stir than even a much bigger haul of hides could have done. There was no doubt at all that if Snake Biter called a meeting on the morrow they should stand before the great war council, in the presence of the entire tribe, to tell what they had



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seen and what had taken place. The arrows would vouch well for the things they would have to say. After an ordinary day they might have lain awake a long time thinking of that big event to come. But not after such a day as this had been. They were sound asleep an hour before the signal fire glowed on the central mountain.



